

# **RESEARCHES IN SANSKRIT AND INDOLOGY**

**Vol. III**

**Philosophy and Religion**

**Satya Vrat Shastri**

**YASH PUBLICATIONS**

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## Conception of Time in Post-Vedic Sanskrit Literature

It is very difficult to say anything definitely about abstract things. Time is one such thing. In the West, philosopher after philosopher and the physicist after physicist has worked on it to know it, yet it seems to be far too elusive.

According to Bergson time is made to a stuff which is called reality. Time is reality itself.

According to Alexander it is the soul of space and space-time is the soul of all reality.

As for Einstein's conception of time we may quote the words of Wildon Carr: "The principle of relativity declares that there is no absolute magnitude, that there exists whatever which can claim to be great or small in its own nature, also there is no absolute duration, nothing whatever which in its own nature is short or long. I co-ordinate my universe from my own standpoint of rest in a system of reference in relation to which all else is moving....Space and Time are not containers nor are they contents but variants.<sup>1</sup>

Such is the line along which the philosophy of time has been developed in the West. Philosopher after philosopher there has studied the concepts of Time and Space. Kant, Alexander, Bergson, Whitehead, Bradley, Taylor, Spinoza—all have tried to analyse the time-concept in their own way. So much of energy has been expended on it and so much of thinking has gone in for its clear exposition that is difficult to present it in a short compass. We, therefore, desist from it and devote ourselves to the exposition of the Time Philosophy in the religious and secular literature of Sanskrit only which is presented in the following pages.



## The Smṛtis

Of all the Smṛtis only the *Manusmṛti* gives us some idea of time and its various divisions. It reads :

*kālam kālavibhaktiś ca  
nakṣatrāṇi grahāṇs tathā.*<sup>2</sup>

The singular in *kālam* in the verse implies time as a principle while plural in *kālavibhaktis* implies the empirical divisions of it.

It is interesting to note here that the above passage has been interpreted differently by different commentators. Medhātithi, Kullūka, Rāghavānanda and Nandana accept the aggregate of the motions of the sun, stars etc. as time. They, therefore, seem to accept the view of the astronomers on time *sa eva grahatārādiparispandaḥ kāla ity ucyate*<sup>3</sup>. Sarvajña Nārāyaṇa, however, differs from this view. He accepts time as *Puruṣa* (Spirit) who is sentient. The word *kālavibhaktiḥ* in the verse in the *Manusmṛti* refers, according to him, to the presiding deities (*abhimānidevatāḥ*) of moments, days, months, years, and epochs. The commentator Rāmacandra differs from both of these views. He accepts time as *Samvatsara* and the divisions of time as the six seasons;

*pūrvam kālam kālātmakasaṁvatsarārūpam kālam  
asṛjat kālasya vibhāgāṁś ca śaḍṛtūn ayanādīnś ca.*

This is clearly the view of the *Rgveda* too. We see there as to how the commentators expound one and the same passage in the *Manusmṛti* according to their own set views and notions.

## The Purāṇas

From *Manusmṛti* we pass on to the Purāṇas. These offer quite a variety of views on Time. Taking the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* first of all, we find that Brahman is described there as existing in the form of *Vyakta*, *Āvyakta*, *Puruṣa* and *Kāla*.

*tad eva sarvam evaitad vyaktāvyaktasvarūpavat ।  
tathā puruṣarūpeṇa kālārūpeṇa ca sthitam ॥*<sup>4</sup>

"All this, whether manifest or unmanifest, is nothing, but that (Intelligence), it appears as *Puruṣa* and as *Kāla*."

Śrīdhara explains the above passage as:



*vyaktaṁ mahadādi, avyaktaṁ pradhānam.*

The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* declares ;

*kālasvarūpaṁ rūpaṁ tad viṣṇor maitreya vartate i<sup>6</sup>*

“O Maitreya! Viṣṇu is of the form of Kāla.” Here the passage explicitly says that Viṣṇu is *Kāla*.

The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* accepts time to be eternal. It existed even before creation came into being, and it will exist even after it is dissolved. As a matter of fact, all this creation and dissolution, etc. do not exist at all. It says:

*anādir bhagavān kālo nānto 'śya dvija vidyate ।*

*avyucchinās tatas tv ete sṛṣṭisthityantasamīyamāḥ i<sup>6</sup>*

“O Brāhmaṇa, the all-powerful *Kāla* is eternal (beginnings) and endless; hence creation, stasis and dissolution are all ever-recurrent”.<sup>7</sup>

It is because *Kāla* is equated here with Viṣṇu that He is spoken of as *Anādi* and *Ananta*. The idea of continuous flow that the passage above conveys, makes it also the basis of the theory of momentariness (*kṣaṇikavāda*) which we find so elaborated in the *Yoga Sūtra* and its *Bhāṣya* where it is said that a moment (*kṣaṇa*) is the ultimate minimum of time and cannot be further divided up...and the continuous flow of such moments is their ‘course’ (*krama*)...their uninterrupted course is what is called ‘time’.<sup>8</sup>

Now we come to the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. In the begining, this *Purāṇa* describes the process of creation.<sup>9</sup> A special power, *śakti*, of the Lord, *Kāla* by name, remains in a dormant and latent state at the time of Dissolution. The *śakti* named *Kāla* impelled by God awakens when the new creation is contemplated. This very idea is conveyed by the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* in the following words :

*so 'ntaḥ śarire'rpitabhūtasūtasūkṣmaḥ kālātmikāṁ śaktim*  
*udīrayāṇaḥ ।*  
*uvāsa tasmin salile pade sve yathānalo dāruṇi ruddhavīryaḥ i<sup>10</sup>*

“He (Viṣṇu), withdrawing all beings into (making all beings recede into) his (all encompassing) Body, and bringing into play his *śakti* known as *Kāla* dwelt in his home of water, like fire latent in wood.”



Śrīdharasvāmin, the commentator, very correctly interprets *kālātmikāṃ śaktim udīrayāṇaḥ* in the verse quoted above as *kālaśakteh preraṇaṃ punaḥ sṛṣṭyavasare prabodhanārtham* or "to bring into play (to impel) *Kālaśakti* means to awaken it again at the beginning of the creation." Those who subscribe to the views of Mādhava, however, interpret *udīrayāṇaḥ* in the sense of creating and thereby conclude that time according to the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is created by God and is hence *anītya*, not eternal. This view does not, however, appeal to reason, for it is doubtful if *√ir* ever means 'to create'. Be that as it may, there can be no doubt, at least on this point, that *Kālaśakti* associated with Lord Viṣṇu whether it is identical with Him or is created by Him, we are not concerned with at present. The associates of *Kālaśakti* is very clearly brought out in the following verse of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*:

*viśvaṃ vai brahma tanmātraṃ saṁsthitaṃ viṣṇumāyayā ।  
īśvareṇa paricchinnaṃ kālenāvyaktamūrtinā*||<sup>12</sup>

"The universe is verily *Brahma-tanmātra*, in essence Brahman, and is withdrawn by the *māyā* of Viṣṇu. It is put forward as something distinct by the Lord with the help of the formless *Kāla*."

The epithet *avyaktamūrti* in the verse above purports to mean that the Lord is by Himself unqualified. This is how the commentator Śrīdharasvāmin construes this verse. In our opinion the Lord is here identified with *Kāla*. *Kālena* is in apposition with *īśvareṇa* and not the instrumental case signifying *nimitta*. The epithet *avyaktamūrtinā* is also in construction with *Kālena* and not with the intercepted *īśvareṇa*.

The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* accepts two kinds of time, gross and subtle, both knowable by inference only. It is time that determines all the actions that are termed manifest, *vyakta*. It reads:

*evam kālo 'py anumitah saukṣmye sthaule ca sattama ।  
saṁsthānabhuktyā bhagavān avyakto vyaktabhug vibhuḥ*||<sup>13</sup>

"Thus time is inferred to be both gross and subtle. O best of men, the Lord, by reason of His pervasion of *paramāṇus*, though Himself unmanifest, enjoys (pervades determines) the



manifest.”

*Samsthāna* in the verse, says the commentator, is in forms such as *paramāṇu* and *bhukti* is its pervasion.

*Bhagavān* means the *śakti* (for there is the identity of *śakti* and the possessor of *śakti*). This very idea is elaborated in the next verse

*sa kālaḥ paramāṇur vai yo bhuñkte paramāṇutām ।  
svato ' viśeṣabhug yas tu sa kālaḥ paramo mahān ॥<sup>4</sup>*

which says that, that much is termed the *Paramāṇukāla* which enjoys atomicity (*paramāṇutā*), by nature pervades everything. He is the great *Kāla*. On this the commentator Śrīdharasvāmin says:

*graharkṣatārācakrastha (bhagavata 3.11.4) ityādinā  
yat sūryaparyāṭanam vakṣyate tatra sūryo yāvatā  
paramāṇudeśam atikrāmati tāvān kālaḥ paramāṇuḥ ,  
yāvatā ca dvādaśarāśyātmakam bhuvanakoṣam  
atikrāmati sa paramamahān saṁvatsarātmakaḥ kālaḥ,  
tasyaivāvṛttyā yugamanvantarā dikrameṇa dviparā-  
rdham tattvam iti. tathā ca pañcame (Adhyāya 21. )  
sūryagatyaiva kālādivibhāgam vakṣyati.*

“The verse *graharkṣatārācakrastha* (*Bhāgavata*, 3.11.13.) speaks of the motion of the sun. That much is termed the *Paramāṇukāla*, which the sun takes to traverse an atom, and that which it takes to traverse all the twelve signs (the zodiac) in the year. By its rotation we have a development beginning with *yuga* (cycle), *manvantara* (period) and ending with *parārdha*. Accordingly the author does well to treat of the division of time as effected by the motion of the Sun.”

The long and short of the whole discussion is that along with the *Kālaśakti* there is also recognised the empirical time which form the *Kālaśakti* assumes on account of the limiting condition, the motion of the Sun.

Of all the Purāṇas (with the full knowledge of the limitation of our study) we can say that it is only the *Viṣṇu* and the *Bhāgavata* which present time-concept with a philosophical and somewhat mystical tint. In other Purāṇas *Kāla* is explicitly recognized as a Deity, all-powerful, and all-pervasive. It is described there as follows:



*anādir eṣa bhagavān kalo'nanto'jaraḥ paraḥ ।  
sārvagatvāt svatantratvāt sarvātmavān maheśvaraḥ ॥*

*brahmāṇo bahavo rudrā anye nārāyaṇādayaḥ ।  
eko hi bhagavān iśaḥ kālāḥ kavir iti smṛtaḥ ॥  
brahmanārāyṇeśānām trayāṇām prakaroti yaḥ ।  
procyate kālayogena punar eva ca sambhavaḥ ॥  
kālenaiva hi sṛjyante se eva grasate punaḥ ।  
tasmāt kālātmakam viśvam sa eva parameśvaraḥ ॥<sup>15</sup>  
anādinidhanaḥ kālo rudraḥ saṅkarṣaṇaḥ smṛtaḥ ।  
karṣaṇāt sarvabhūtānām sa tu Saṅkarṣaṇaḥ smṛtaḥ ॥  
sarvabhūtaśamitvāc ca sa rudraḥ parikīrtitaḥ ।  
anādinidhanatvena sa mahān parameśvaraḥ ॥<sup>16</sup>*

“The great is Lord beginningless and endless (*anādi ranantaḥ*). He is said to have created even gods like Vāsudeva, Svyambhū and Śaṅkara. There are many gods like many Rudras and Nārāyaṇa etc. Of all these he is the great Lord. He is the great Lord as he is all-pervasive, independent and the soul of all.”

It is this conception of *Kāla* as a Deity, all-powerful and all-pervasive, that seems to find an echo in the work of the great grammarian Bhartṛhari when he, while mentioning the three different views on Time, picks up the concept of Time as a Deity as one among them. Says he—*Śaktyātmadeatāpakṣair bhinnam kālasya darśanam*.<sup>17</sup> About its *Devatāpakṣa* Helārāja's comment is significant ; *kecit tu mahāprabhāvām devatām kālātvenābhyupapannāḥ*, which means that some regard time to be an all-powerful Deity.

### Agama Literature

Now, from the Purāṇas, we pass on to the Āgamas. There are different Āgamas from which we have traced here a lot of references to time. We shall take up these Āgamas one by one and deal with them briefly.

### Pratyabhijñādarśana

A school of Kāśmīra Śaivism, the Pratyabhijñādarśana recognizes *Kāla*. We read :

*sarvakaraḥ sarvajñaḥ pūrṇo nityo'saṅkucamś ca ।*



*viparīta iva maheśo yābhis tā bhavanti pañca śaktrayaḥ ॥*<sup>18</sup>

Out of the five *śaktis* referred to here, one is which the Parimala, the commentary, explains as *bhāvāṇām avabhāsa-nānavabhāsanātmā kramah*.

According to this Darśana, the five *śaktis* are in no way different from *Īśvarecchā* or the will of God and this again is not different from *kriyā*. About *Kāla* it is said that it has no existence outside the cognizer (experient). It comes to be related to the objects of cognition through the cognizer. This is what Ācārya Abhinavagupta says in the following words :

*kālaḥ kramam āsūtrayan pramātari vijṛmbhamāṇaḥ  
tadanusāreṇa prameye 'pi prasaratī*<sup>19</sup>

### Mṛgendrāgama

According to the *Mṛgendrāgama*, *kāla* is perishable, non-pervasive and manifold. It is non-sentient. The view of the Naiyāyikas that *kāla* is not *kriyā* is acceptable to this school. The nature of *kāla* is discussed in a beautiful passage in the *Mṛgendrāgamavṛttidīpikā* which bears reproduction :

*astu tarhi Naiyāyikādyabhūpagata evātra kriyāvya-  
tiriktaḥ kālaḥ. satyam. na tu nityo vyāpako vā. tasya  
vividhatvenānekatvāt acetanatvāc ca . ekarūpative hi  
kālasya sarvadā padārthānām ekakālatā syāt, drśyante  
ca kecid varta mānāḥ kecid atītāḥ bhāvinaś ca kecid  
bhāvāḥ. tataḥ kālasyanekatvaṁ. kāla eva triprakāraḥ*<sup>20</sup>

“Let us accept the view of the Naiyāyikas that *kāla* is something other than *kriyā* (action). But that cannot be eternal and ubiquitous, it being diverse and composite (manifold) and non-sentient. If the time be a uniform entity, all things would be contemporaneous. But things are perceived to be either present or past or future. It, therefore, follows that *kāla* is manifold. Time is of three kinds.”

### Śaktas

The Śāktas believe that this world is a product of reflection of *Citi* and is, therefore, unreal. They say :

*...ekarūpāpi citiḥ svāntantrīyahetutaḥ ।  
svāntar vibhāsayed bāhyam ādarśe gaganam yathā ॥*



*nāsti cetyaṁ citer anyat  
darpaṇe pratibimbavat* <sup>21</sup>

*Kāla* is also an assumption, it has no existence in fact. The assumed *kāla* too is free from such variations as subtlety (*sūkṣmatva*) and elongation (*dirghatva*). It is only our thinking that differentiates one and the same thing. This is declared in so many words in the *Tripurārahasya* :

*deśaḥ kālo* 'thavā kiñcid yathā 'nena vibhāvitam ।  
*tathā tat tatra bhāseta dirghasūkṣmatvabhedaṭaḥ*. <sup>122</sup>

### Nakulīśapāśupatas

The *Nakulīśapāśupata* school, otherwise known as *Pañcārthaśāstra* on account of the five categories in which it believes, does not seem to accept *kāla* as an independent entity. The five *Padārthas* that the followers of the school enumerate do not include *kāla*. Nor is *kāla* acceptable to another branch of this school which accepts only three *Padārthas*, *Tattva*, *Guṇa*, and *Bhava*. The first branch of the *Nakulīśapāśupata* school believes that *Īśvara*, the one cause of all, is *Kāla*, the Destroyer.

### Dvaitaśāktas

The *Dvaita-śāktas* postulate four categories. They are named in the *Parānandasūtra* as: *anādyanantasādyanantā-nādisāntasādisāntāḥ*.<sup>23</sup> To them *kāla* is beginningless and endless and is all pervasive. Itself limited in the form of *kṣaṇa* (moment). *nimeṣa* (wink) it limits objects such as a jar.

*kālaḥ paricchadakāḥ paricchinnas ca*.<sup>24</sup>

### Prapañcasāra

According to the *Prapañcasāra*, attributed to Saṅkarācārya, three external Existences are admitted—matter, soul and time. The commentator Padmapādācārya explains:

*evaṁ parakālasyāpi svarūpam abhidhāyāparam kālam  
prastauti-laveti*.

Each one of these is twofold, being differentiated as *para* and *apara*. The *Prayogakramadīpikā*, however, explains that *Kāla* is unreal. It says:

*devatātattvaṁ cidrūpam ekam eva, tasya svaśakti-*



*kalpita evāyam prakṛtipuruṣakālātmakavikalpaḥ* <sup>25</sup>

and adds:

*atra ca prakṛtiviśayasarvajñā napreraṇālakṣaṇa  
idrūpaṁkālasya svarūpam ity api pratipāditam* <sup>26</sup>

giving us a definition of time, stating precisely the nature of its function.

The view of the *Prapañcasāra* briefly is: The Absolute Reality viewed as *Prakṛti* is Pure Consciousness and is the origin of all things. It remains always what it is and yet when the latent *karmans* of *jīvas* are matured for fructification it becomes, in a part as it were, alienated from itself, externalized and relatively dense. This part is called *Prakṛtitattva*. When *Kāla* acts on the lower *Prakṛti*, the latter is split up into three forms, viz., *Bindu*, *Nāda* and *Bīja*. The cleavage of *Prakṛti* under the influence of Time is the occasion for the origin of what for lack of more appropriate, term is called sound (*Śabda*) which is equivalent to what philosophers describe as *Avyakta* or *Śabda Brahman*. It is evident from the above that in this view *Kāla* functions as the maturer of *karma*-seeds (*karma-pācaka*) and then as the energiser of *Prakṛti*.

### Trika Literature

In the *Trika* Literature *Kāla*, viewed in the Absolute *Parama Śiva*, represents His Supreme Freedom (*Svātantryaśakti*) looked upon as *Kriyāśakti* projecting the Universe till now unified with the Absolute and making it appear as external to it. The projection of the Universe is, therefore, only the apparent externalization of the Eternal Consciousness. The so-called creative process (*Viśvakalanā*) is only the outer aspect of the *Kriyāśakti*, which inspite of its seeming eternality retains itself always. The truth is that the Absolute Consciousness first appears as Life or *Prāṇa* (i.e. *Kriyāśakti*) on which as a base is built up the entire fabric of Time and Space.

### Time in Secular Literature

In all these pages we have been dealing with the concept of time in the *Smṛtis* and the *Purāṇas*. Now we propose to deal with it in the secular literature. When we study it, we find in it



sometimes striking references to time in its philosophical aspect. The older texts like the *Mahābhāṣya* and the *Caraka Saṁhitā* very often present to us various views on time in a philosophical garb and, therefore, indicate that phase of the development of the secular literature when the word *kāla* had not become restricted to the meaning of 'death' or the 'god of death,' the meaning which it developed in later *kāvya* literature. Under this heading of 'Time in Secular Literature' we propose to deal with six authors and commentators—Patañjali, Caraka, Ḍaḥaṇa, Vātsyāyana, Yaśodhara (commentator on the *Kāmasūtra* of Vātsyāyana) and Bhartṛhari, the author of the *Vākyapadīya*. We include the popular view and the views of the *Yogavāsiṣṭha* and the astronomers too under this very heading.

### Patañjali

Patañjali has not attributed eternity to the Vedas and *Śabda* (Sphoṭa) alone but has also included, the sky, heaven, space and time in the same category. According to the Naiyāyikas, the earth, light, water and air are external in so far as their ultimate atoms are concerned while the sky, time, mind, the quarters and the soul are regarded to be permanent in their entirety. Under the rule *nitye hi kālanakṣatre*<sup>27</sup> Patañjali has expressly stated that both time and stars are permanent. He arrives at the final stage of his arguments that a thing wherein the ultimate essence is not destroyed is also to be considered to be permanent ;

*tad api nityam yasmimś tattvaṁ na vihanyate.*<sup>28</sup>

Time is said to be the ultimate substratum of the world: *Kālo hi jagadādhāraḥ*. It is indivisible, permanent, one, and permeating the whole world. We can neither trace its origin, nor divide it into parts. Things grow and perish in time. Patañjali defines time as that whereby the growth and decay of material objects are perceived :

*yena mūrṭinām upacayāś cāpacayaś ca lakṣyante taṁ  
kālam āhuḥ tasyaiva kayācīt kriyayā yuktasyāhar itī  
bhavati ratrir itī ca.*<sup>29</sup>

The division of time into day and night, months, years, cycles etc. is only an artificial process of calculation, it is by



virtue of its conjunction with some action as the movement of the Sun: *kayā kriyayā ? ādityagatyā*<sup>30</sup> that we say it is day, it is night. In other words the movement of the Sun is the basis of our conception of the so-called divisions of time.

Patañjali also discusses whether there is present time or not. In this connection he says —

*anāgatam atikrāntam vartamānam iti trayam ।  
sarvatra ca gatir nāsti gacchātīti kim ucyate ॥*<sup>31</sup>

He then discusses the pros and cons of the views of the non-existence of the present time and ultimately proves that the present time does exist. Altogether he quotes six beautiful verses which he frankly admits are taken from other works.

### Caraka

*Caraka Saṁhitā*, even though it shows special favour for Sāṁkhya views at the other places, enumerates in *Sūtrasthāna*, (towards the beginning of the *Saṁhitā*) nine substances,

*khādīny ātmā manaḥ kālo diśaś ca dravyasaṁgrahaḥ*<sup>32</sup>

which are accepted by the Vaiśeṣikas. The nine substances are—earth, water, fire, air, sky, time, space (*dik*), soul and mind. These nine substances of the Vaiśeṣikas include *Kāla* and, as Caraka accepts these very nine substances, he shows that time is according to him, a substance. Further, Caraka divides substances into sentient (*cetana*) and non-sentient (*acetana*),

*śendriyaṁ cetanaṁ dravyaṁ nirindriyaṁ acetanaṁ*<sup>33</sup>

of which the Soul only is sentient on account of its association with the sense-organs while all the rest of the substances including *Kāla*, are non-sentient.

While enumerating the nine substances Caraka says,

*kālo diśaś ca dravyasaṁgrahaḥ*.<sup>34</sup>

Caraka accepts *Kāla* as one. It seems, therefore, that so far as the concept of time is concerned Caraka subscribes to the Vaiśeṣika view.

### Ḍaḥaṇa

Ḍaḥaṇa, the commentator of the *Suśruta Saṁhitā*, seems to subscribe to the view of the Sāṁkhya. To him, as to the



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 teachers of Śaṅkhya, *Kāla* is a modification of *rajoguṇa* and  
 is not different from *Prakṛti* itself. Quotes Ḍaḥaṇa

*mahābhūtaviśeṣāms tu śītoṣṇadravyabhedaḥ ।  
 kāla ity adhyavasyanti nyāyamārgānusārīṇaḥ ॥  
 kriyātvena rajoguṇapariṇāmatvān mahābhūtapa-  
 riṇāmaviśeṣatvāc ca na kālasya prakṛter anyatvam*<sup>35</sup>

### Vātsyāyana and Yaśodhara

In the *Kāmasūtra* of Vātsyāyana, there is no reference to  
 the nature of *Kāla*. Only this much is said that *Kāla* is the cause  
 of good or bad, victory or defeat, happiness or sorrow

*kāla eva hi puruṣān arthānarthayor jayaparājayaḥ  
 sukhaduḥkhaḥ ca sthāpayati*<sup>36</sup>

But in the commentary *Jayamaṅgalā* by Yaśodhara, time is  
 said to be eternal and is called a substance

*kālo nāma dravyapadārtho nityaḥ*<sup>37</sup>

This view also seems to conform to the Vaiśeṣika  
 standpoint.

### Astronomers

The astronomers believe that *Kāla* is nothing but the  
 movement of the planets, stars, etc. Jayantabhaṭṭa says in  
*Nyāyamañjarī* :

*na devadattādiparispondanibandhanāḥ kramākramā-  
 dipratyayāḥ, kintu grahanakṣatrādiparispā-  
 ndanibandhanāḥ ; sa eva grahatārādiparispondanāḥ  
 kāla ity ucyate । tatkr̥ta evāyaṁ yāmāhorātramāsā-  
 divyavahārāḥ ।... Kālavidaś ca jyotirgaṇakās ta  
 evainaṁ budhyante*<sup>38</sup>

The same idea is expressed in *Mrgendravṛttidīpikā* in words:

*jyotiḥśāstradr̥ṣṭyā kriyāviśeṣātmaka evābhyu-  
 pagamyate*<sup>39</sup>

In Astronomy it (*Kāla*) is accepted as a special movement  
 (of the stars, planets, etc). Then the *Mrgendravṛttidīpikā* (10.15.)  
 gives the following verse.

*ādityagrahatārādiparispondam athāpare ।  
 bhinnam āvṛttibhedena kālaṁ kālavido viduḥ*<sup>40</sup>



“Other knowers of time know *kāla* to be the movement of the Sun, the planets and the stars as differentiated by revolutions.”

### Yogavāsiṣṭha

In the *Yogavāsiṣṭha* is given a detailed description of the emergence of the Creation. There it is said that ‘immediately after the creation of *Jiva*, the *Kha* (sky, ether) emerges which is almost a void, the germ of properties such as sound, and which gives significance to future names. Later *Āhaṁkāra* follows along with Time :

*saṁnāntaram evāsyāḥ kṣaṭtodeṭi sūnyatā ।  
śabdādiguṇabījāṁ sā bhaviṣyad abhidhārthadā ॥  
ahantodeṭi tadanu saha vai kālasattayā. १<sup>41</sup>*

The *Vāsiṣṭhatātparyprakāśa* explains the text thus :

*Now, with a view to discussing the creation of Mahābhūtas the writer begins with the creation of Kha. Immediately after the creation of Jivā, the Kha comes into being, itself almost a void, being the substratum of the remaining four elements. After the creation of the Sun etc., it gives significance to future names such as Ākāśa which literally means ‘what shines all round’....This creation of Ākāśa, Āhaṁkāra and Kāla is not from Hiranyagarbha but from the Supreme Being limited by its particular forms.<sup>42</sup>*

In the *Śukropākhyāna* of the *Yogavāsiṣṭha* while Bhṛgu is about to pronounce a curse on *Kāla* who has taken away the life of his son. *Kāla* appears in human form and says: “Your curse would make no difference to me. For I am the manager of destiny (*vayaṁ niyatipālakāḥ*). Your curse would fail to burn me, for I am the eater and you are the food. I have consumed rows of universe, swallowed crores of *Rudras*.<sup>43</sup>

The description of *Kāla* as it is given in the *Śukropākhyāna* is interesting from two points of view. Firstly, *Kāla* is here an allegorical description of the empirical time divided into months and seasons. Secondly, it recognizes the all-powerful character of *Kāla*. In other words it believes *Kāla* to be a Supreme Force as it is recognized by many other schools of Indian philosophy.

The *Yogavāsiṣṭha* is remarkable in that it sets forth views that agree strikingly with the latest theories on time and space.



Time and space are relative to the observer. This is the Theory of Relativity of Einstein about time and space, which has revolutionised all the thinking about time and space. A day may appear much shorter to a man who is gay and cheerful, while it may appear much longer to one who is pensive and tired. The same can be said about distance. A man high in spirits will not mind walking a distance of ten miles in a hill station where he has gone for enjoyment and fun, while the same distance may appear never-ending to a hilly labourer who toils hard the whole day, wearied and broken and leaves for his home in the evening. According to this view, all the motion that appears in the Creation is due to the conscious passage of time in an observer. This fact leads us to the well-known *dr̥ṣṭisṛṣṭivāda*, the theory that there is no creation without an observer.

The theory that time and space are relative to the observer is propounded in the *Yogavāsīṣṭha* at a number of places. It is said that time and space are thoughts. It is upon thoughts that their existence depends.

Just as the appearance of the world is a thought-appearance, so also is the appearance of the moments and ages.<sup>44</sup> A moment is doubtless experienced as a *Kalpa*, when consciousness of *Kalpa* is experienced in it; similarly a *Kalpa* is experienced as a moment if the consciousness of a moment is present in it.<sup>45</sup> The same period of a night is experienced as a *Kalpa* by the miserable, and a moment by the happy. In dream a moment is experienced as a *Kalpa* and a *Kalpa* is passed as a moment. Time-Space order is dependent on the mind. The mind can experience a moment as a *Kalpa* and vice-versa within itself.<sup>46</sup> What is a life-time to Manu is an hour to Brahmā, what is a life-time to Viṣṇu is a day to Śiva. He, whose mind is lost in meditation, experiences neither day nor night.<sup>47</sup> A day passes as a year for those who are separated from their beloveds.<sup>48</sup> The whole world-process occurs within a millionth part of a moment of the consciousness of the Self.<sup>49</sup> The extent of the same world-process may be a moment for some and a long age for others. As a person experiencing a dream has the experience of stability, so has the person experiencing the world process.



According to Svāmī Mādhavatīrtha<sup>40</sup> the *Yogavāsiṣṭha* is the only philosophical work in India in which the concept of time is made sufficiently clear. This agrees remarkably with the latest discoveries of the modern science. The Svāmī quotes three stories from the *Yogavāsiṣṭha* and proves that these indicate the relative concept which is accepted to be the latest theory on time.

### Time in Popular View

*Kāla* in popular view has nothing to do with its philosophical abstruseness. As in old days so now the common man uses the word in the sense of time and fate. The senses of time and fate given to *Kāla* include the notion of death, primarily as being the fate from which no living being can escape. *Kāla* gradually becomes synonymous with death. The deity of time and a god of death form one heavenly being. *Kāla* is the same as *Yama*. Śiva is *Mahākālī*, the Great time and at the same time the Great Death. *Mahākālī* is a form of Durgā which she assumes to bring destruction. Though *Kālī* originally means 'the blue-black', the similarity of sound with *Kāla* must not be altogether neglected. Like Śiva, Viṣṇu has been, also associated with *Kāla*, but time, the general destroyer and giver to life, seems on the whole, more appropriate to the character of Śiva.

### Bhartrhari

Bhartrhari has discussed time: What it is and how it functions, in section IX of Kāṇḍa III of his *Vākyapaṭīya*. This section, herein termed the *Kāla Samuddeśa* contains 114 *Kārikās*. Of these the first 79 *Kārikās* deal with the philosophical views held about time by the various schools of thought, and with the nature and function of time as understood by Bhartrhari himself, and the rest offer well-reasoned justification for the various uses of the tenses in Pāṇini's Grammar, and serve to elucidate the pertinent passages in the *Bhāṣya*. Before we reproduce here and discuss the various other theories about time recorded by Bhartrhari, we propose to put down what this great thinker has to say about time, what is his personal view of it, for that must have precedence over others.

One thing must strike to a critical student of the *Vākyapa-*



*dīya*, is that there is no perfect order in which Bhartṛhari presents the various views about *Kāla*. Usually a verse or two are read to enunciate a particular view. This is followed sometimes by some discussion on questions arising out of a clarification of it; sometimes it is left severely alone with a summary remark. Bhartṛhari glides along in his own masterly way apparently unmindful of setting in complete order what he says. No link is sought to be established between the various views; they are not presented in a string; they lie scattered here and there. Sometimes it is his view, sometimes another's. But whosoever it is, it is always supported and never refuted. Thus the *Kāla Samuddeśa* of his is a veritable repertory of the various theories and views that once held ground and still hold it. (cp. *Kārikās* 57.58 and 68 ).

### Bhartṛhari's Own View

In *Kārikā* 62 of this section, Bhartṛhari sums up the three recognized views about time:

*Śaktyātmadevatāpakṣair bhinnam Kālasya darśanam*<sup>1</sup>

Time is either a *Śakti* or an *Ātman* or a *Devatā*. Helārāja, the commentator tells us that 'time is *Śakti*' is the considered view of Bhartṛhari himself. While commenting on III.9.1.14, he refers to the above *Kārikā* with the words; *ihāpi siddhānta-yiṣyati*. He assimilates the other two views to the first, since, to him they seem to conform to the first in the ultimate analysis. We however differ.

To us it appears that Bhartṛhari acknowledges the other two views as independent notions of time, and not as subordinate to his own. The connecting link placed at the head of the *Kārikā*: 'Now he sums up different views regarding the Reality, Time,' also supports our contention. Besides, we find the echo of the view that *Kāla* is a *devatā* (a deity) in the *Purāṇas*. The *Kūrma Purāṇa* reads :

*anādir eṣa bhagavān kālo 'nanto'jaraḥ I sarvagatvāt  
savatantratvāt sarvātmavān mahāprabhāvam*<sup>2</sup>

Helārāja, too notes:

*anye tu vighrahaṭim mahāprabhāvam*



*devatām Kālatvena pratipannāḥ'*

alludes to the view that Kāla is jīva.

True it is that to the author of the *Vākyapadīya*, Kāla is a *Śakti*, and a *Śakti* of Brahman. While discussing the nature of *Śabda-brahman* in Kāṇḍa 1, verse 3, he tells us what he thinks of time.

In his lucid gloss on the said *Kārikā*, he declares it unequivocally that all other generated, dependent subject-forces are pervaded by *kāla*, which alone is independent and follow the operation of this *Śakti* in their working.

How this *Śakti* of Brahman operates and with what results is, given in *Kārikās* 3-8 of this section. We are here told that *kāla* is the instrumental cause in the creation, persistence and destruction of all things that have an origin, etc... *Kāla* seems to be itself diversified by the diversity of limiting adjuncts (*Upādhis*) and then diversifies the things in conjunction with it. Hence (being the instrumental cause), *Kāla* is the string-puller in the dumb show of this world. It is because of the powers of *pratibandha* and *abhyānujñā* that this world comes to possess succession in action. What is the meaning of *pratibandha* and *abhyānujñā*? Bhartṛhari credits *Kāla* with these two effective powers. The first means the preventive power and the second, the permissive power. What leads him to imagine that these two powers must belong to *Kāla*? If there were no *pratibandha*, so argues he, there would be no order in this universe, no progression or regression; there would result perfect chaos, all action being simultaneous. Thus a seed, a sprout, a stem and a stalk—all would emerge and exist together. Therefore all objects having origination, though having peculiar causes, must have *Kāla* as an additional contributory cause for ordered progress.

These two powers namely, *pratibandha* and *abhyānujñā* correspond more or less to the two powers, *vikṣepa* and *āvaraṇa* ascribed to *avidyā* or *māyā* by the later writers on *Ādwaita*.

### Earlier Interpretation Refuted

Helārāja refers to some earlier commentators who take *Śakti* in *Kārikā* 62 referred to above to mean the generating cause



which they say is itself time. Their case may be briefly stated as follows :

The power called seed, while it permits the appearance of the sprout, prevents the synchronous growth of the stalk. Similarly the power called sprout permits the production of the next effect, while restraining the production of the subsequent effects. Hence the generating cause is itself time.

This is a wrong interpretation and Helārāja convincingly refutes it. He points out that all this is tantamount to saying that particular effects proceed from particular causes, wherever these (causes) are present, and not otherwise. But since those effects take place at a particular time and not at any time, even when the generating causes are there, the additional regulating cause, namely time, must be acknowledged. The various phases of existence proceeding from a series of causes have a succession; and this succession is a power of *Kāla*, the condition of all being.

To Bhartṛhari, *Kāla* is *one*, it is unitary. It is because of its relation to motions such as of the sun, that *Kāla* becomes many. The great thinker emphatically declares that things are in themselves neither diverse nor uniform. Time is one (indivisible), yet it appears to have so many divisions. How? The essential nature of a substance is, it has to be admitted, not the object of our parlance; it is inexpressible.<sup>53</sup> When we conceive unity to inhere in it, we say it is one, when we conceive the white or the dark colour to inhere in it, we say it is white or dark; and when we conceive the universal 'cowness' to inhere in it, we say it is a cow; similarly time comes to have the appellations such as the time of origination, the time of persistence, the time of destruction etc., on account of its conjunction with the action of origination etc. The movements of the sun, the planets and the stars which are in conjunction with time give it the appearance of divisibility; thus the time determined by the sunrise and the sunset is the day; so on and so forth.

If *Kāla* is one, how do we account for the various time-divisions such as the days, months, seasons and years? This question has been raised and discussed at a number of places in the *Vākyapadiya*. The author gives in answer to it in *Kārikā*



III. 9.32. The answer is that they are there on account of the diversity of action (*kriyā-bheda*), in external things. These divisions are superimposed upon time and are not integral to it. They do not affect it at all, they make no change to it. Just as a man becomes a carpenter for the time he is chiselling a piece of wood, and a smith when he is forging a piece of iron, but does not cease to be man or get divided into two men; similarly, time is called spring when there appear symptoms like flowers, a kind of humidity in the atmosphere and the charming cooing of the cuckoo. When there appear other symptoms like the falling off of the leaves of the trees, a kind of forbidding chillness in the atmosphere a change in the direction of the sun, we say it is autumn. The spring and autumn are no part of the substance, time. It is a case of an *adhyāsa* (superimposition).

*kriyābhedaḥ yathaikasmins takṣādyākyaḥ pravartate ।  
kriyābhedaḥ tathaikasminn ṛtvādyākhyopapadyate ॥<sup>54</sup>*

And, if time is eternal and unchangeable, how is it that we hear of such judgments as : It is good time, it is bad time, the *kṛtayuga* is good and auspicious, the *Kali* is bad and inauspicious? We cannot change time and import external goodness or badness into it. Both goodness and badness are extrinsic to time; they are transferred to it. They originally belong to actions. When good actions are performed, we say it is good time, when bad, we say it is bad time. Time knows no change?

*karṭṛbhedaḥ tadartheṣu pracayāpacayaḥ gataḥ ।  
samatvaṁ viśamatvaṁ vā tad ekaḥ pratipadyate ॥<sup>55</sup>*

To Bhartṛhari, time, though itself unchangeable is the cause of all change, motion and order. Every object is governed by the power of *Kāla*. Why the sun rises and sets at regular hours, why the moon shines for the night and not for the day; why the sun moves for six months along the southern path (*dakṣiṇāyana*) and for another six months along the northern path (*uttarāyana*), why the planets and stars move in a particular order—all these can only be explained as being due to the all-pervasive and all-powerful nature of *Kāla*. The coming into existence and passing out of existence, the appearance and disappearance of all objects is caused by time alone.



Other differentiations of time are also unreal, they are merely superimposed. A thing is *not* before it actually comes into being; *it is*, when it has been created. The mind, however, conceives it as *one* positive existence. When we set about putting together the competent means to the fulfilment of an act, we say it is Commencement time, when the means thus put together start operating, we say it is Performance time. And when a thing desired to be effected has been accomplished, we say it is Closing time.

But time remains unaltered by these ideal divisions, says the great thinker; the Commencement-time, etc. in the case of a *dvyanuka* (dvad) is exactly the same as that of the Himālayan range. The nature of a thing can neither be altered nor augmented.<sup>55</sup> The meaning is that objects are essentially indivisible (*suarūpeṇa niraṁśā*) wholes, they would indeed be divisible if they were no more than a conglomeration of parts; hence the Commencement-time, etc. does not differ. The component parts are quite different from the whole they make. A jar is verily different from the sherds which go to form it. Even the magnitude, a property, is different from the whole. With the difference therefore in magnitude, things need not differ, suffer augmentation or reduction. Hence all produce substances, all wholes being non-distinguishable, it is not because of them that the Commencement-time etc. of objects of small magnitude or great, differs, but because of properties other than, additional to, the whole.<sup>56</sup>

How does the Commencement-time etc. differ then? The question is answered by Bhartrhari in the next *Kārikā*

*anyais tu bhāvair anyeṣāṁ pracayaḥ parikalpyate ।  
śanair idam idam kṣipram iti tena pratiyate*<sup>57</sup>

It is the parts (different from the wholes) which, if many, account for the greatness of the magnitude of the wholes; if a few, the smallness of the magnitude of them. Accordingly a whole made up of many parts is accomplished slowly, and one made up of lesser parts quickly. Hence in either case, the Commencement-time etc. is recognized as different. Since the parts lose their identity in the whole, the whole is designated after the properties of the parts, and not that the time of whole does



differ, as a matter of fact.

It is further explained in *Kārikā* :

*asataś ca krama nāsti sa hi bhettum na śakyate ।  
sato 'pi cātmataṭṭvān yat tat tathaivāvaśiṣṭhatell<sup>58</sup>*

an object does not exist before origination as already observed. Hence, previous to origination, it being non-existent, it could have no succession, there being no division into prior and posterior. And even when it has been produced and does exist, it cannot be differentiated, its nature persists; hence there is no succession. Succession, as explained by Helārāra, is based on difference, and difference cannot be there in each separate mode of an object which essentially consists of two modes, existent and non-existent while yet in the process of production. The two modes are pieced together by the intellect and differentiated as prior and posterior. There is first an idea of the non-existent and then of the existent, the succession is otherwise ideal. Hence even the sequence in the produced things is hypothetical ; much more so the sequence in time, which is based upon that assumption.

Bhartṛhari repeats the idea at a number of places that *kāla* is *Svātantrya Sakti*, as for example in *Kārikā*.<sup>58</sup> He explains how *kāla* which is *vibhu* is significantly so called, since it urges all *hālas* (*Saktis*) by its cycles such as the spring, which are comparable to the revolution of the water-wheel.

### The Advaitin's View as Given by Bhartṛhari

The question arises : Is this *Kāla Sakti* identical with *Brahman* or different from it? The answer is that to the Advaitin (as Hari undoubtedly is), the *sakti* and the possessor of *Sakti* is one entity, not two. The difference is only apparent. The properties (*dharma*s) are held to be non-distinct from the substance (*dharmin*). This Hari himself says in the *Brahma kānda*.

*apṛthakte 'pi śaktibhyaḥ pṛthaktveneṇa vartate<sup>59</sup>*

Abinavagupta also subscribes to this view. In his *Bodhapañcadaśikā*, he remarks that *Sakti* does not want to be differentiated from the *Saktimat* (the possessor of *Sakti*). They are eternally one, like fire and its consuming power.



*saktiś ca śaktimadrūpād vyatirekaṁ na vāñchati |  
tādātmyam anayor nityaṁ vahnidāhakayor iva*<sup>60</sup>

To be precise the *Kāla Sakti* can only be *anirukta* (undefined) :

*ekasya hi Brahmanas tattvānyatvābhyāṁ sattvāsatt -  
vābhyāṁ cāniruktavirodhiśaktyupagrāhyasyāsattya-  
rūpapravibhāgasya svapnavijñāna puruṣavad  
abahistattvāḥ parasparavilakṣaṇā bhokṭṛbhoktavy -  
abhogagranthayo vivartante*".

"The conception of the one ultimate reality, be it Sabdabrahman, Ātmabrahman, Sattā Brahman, or Vijñānabrahman led the exponents of advaita philosophy to ascribe to it a power called *māyā*, *ajñāna*, *avidyā* or *Kāla Sakti*, which is unique in its nature and which is capable of projecting this phenomenal world, the *bāhyaprapaṇca*". Bhartṛhari calls this power by the term *Kāla Sakti* and *avidyā*. This is set forth by Hari himself in his inimitable way in his *Vṛtti* on 1.4. Says he: 'of the one Brahman that must be assumed to possess Saktis which can neither be said to be identical with Brahman nor distinct from it, neither existent nor non-existent, which are free from mutual conflict (in so far as they subsist simultaneously in the one substratum), of the Brahman which is only apparently partite; are the various unreal modifications such as the enjoyer, the thing enjoyed, the act of enjoyment—all of which do not exist externally like the person in a dreamvision.

### Does Time Really Exist?

How do we know that there exists something that is called *kāla* (time)? There must be some evidence for it; mere belief in the tradition or scripture would not do. In *Kārikā* .

*nirbhāsopagamo yo 'kramavān iva lakṣyate |  
akramasyāpi viśvasya tat kālasya viceṣṭitam*<sup>61</sup>

Hari observes:

*This universe which is really devoid of sequence (or  
succession) seems to have one is indeed due to he work-  
ing of time*



The all-pervasive time operating with its two powers *pratibandha* and *abhyanuññā* is responsible for this notion. But for *Kāla* all this *krama* would not be explainable. Then the notion of quickness and slowness too is explainable only on the admission that time exists. Just as this distance is long, this is short, is determined by the pace of the person walking and has nothing to do with the space walked over; for what is far for a slow-moving person is near for another of nimble foot. Similarly though time never varies yet by virtue of an action which has a greater continuity, it comes to be called slow (*cira*) while another with a lesser continuity gives it the qualification (*kṣipra*) quick. The idea is that the notions *cira* and *kṣipra* must have an *adhikaraṇa* in which they could reside and that *adhikaraṇa* is *kāla*.

There is yet another evidence. The question how an action which is over (past) and, therefore, non-existent could give the appellation *bhūta* (past) to *Kāla* is beautifully answered by Hari:

*kāle nidhāya svaṁ rūpaṁ prajñayā yaṁ nigṛhyate  
bhāvās tato nīvartante tatra saṁkrāntaśaktayaḥ*<sup>62</sup>

In plain English, the *Kārikā* means: Things effected by action are called *atīta* (past), losing their identity (*svarūpa*). Whatever notion the mind forms of them in the present, they deposit in their stable receptacle, time, and they vanish, since after being perceived they become objects of recollection, with their *śaktis* transferred to the past stage (*vyavahāraṁ svāttam anupatanti*). The principle of time is cognizable only through the *upādhis* of the various objects, and they when being recollected, transfer their own qualification (pastness) to time. Hence we say there was a jar. This indeed is the logical ground for the existence of *Kāla*, for if it did not exist, there would be no such usage.

Not only that. In the next *Kārikā*

*bhāvānāṁ caiva yad rūpaṁ tasya ca pratibibakamī  
sunirmṛṣṣṭa ivādarśe kā laevopapadyate*<sup>63</sup>

Hari seeks to clarify the use of *bhaviṣyat* (future) with regard to things. The external form (*dṛṣṭyarūpa*) of things which are yet to be, viz., things whose 'becoming' is expected when the



competent causes of them are present and the image of that external form formed in the mind (*vikalpyarūpa*) are brought together and unified in the stable receptacle of time whereon futurity is superimposed by the transference of *Śaktis*. It is because of the qualified time that things are called future or ensuing. But for time, it would not be possible to explain satisfactorily the use of future with regard to things. This is beautifully brought out by a simile: just as it is only after an image has been seen in a spotless mirror, that one becomes sure of the form outside, similarly we see through *Kāla* the real form of things.

That time is an independent entity can also be inferred from the fact of dripping of water from a hole in a jar. This dripping is emphatically declared by Bhartṛhari,

*pratibandhābhyānujñābhyām nālikāvivarāśrite  
yad ambhasi prakṣaraṇam tat kālasyaiva ceṣṭitam*<sup>64</sup>

to be due to the working of time, and hence constitutes the logical ground for its existence. Helārāja's following comments on this *Kārikā* are elucidating and bear reproduction. 'We observe that only a part of the quantity of water contained in a jar drips at a time from a hole in it and the remaining party does not drip simultaneously with it. What could this be due to?' It is certainly due to the preventive and permissive forces that time possesses; for if it were otherwise, the whole, here the water, which permeates all its component parts, must drip all at once, under its own weight. Since there is graduation in the act of dripping, time, a separate entity must be admitted to be at work here and that dripping itself is time must be ruled out. The dripping is only a determination of time. This dripping, itself determined by such acts as winking, movement of the vital airs, the continuous flow of the moments, serves to determine the time which is other than it. Winking, etc., too, is determined by *kāla* in its subtle form of succession; hence the power *Kāla* known as *Krama* (succession) is to be found interwoven with all things in a subtle way and cannot be denied.

There is yet another equally cogent reason to believe that time is. How can two actions having a beginning and an end in common, and inhering in two different substratā be differenti-



ated, the one as quick, the other as slow; unless there be an entity in relation to both the actions at the same time? Now all action is a collection of moments. Since the moments do not exist simultaneously all action is *sakrama*, possessed of succession, and this cannot but be due to the power of time. Succession is indeed a property of time. It is time that has a succession, and it is because of relation with time that actions appear to have it. Although action is one, yet it is here said to be two because of the two substrata. Hence the notion of *cira* (slow), *kṣipra* (quick) is not because of the unity of action. Because even when the substrata differ, we have the same notion of the one as of the other; for we say: "The jar is formed late, the cloth is fashioned late." It should not have been possible, for there were two actions inhering in two different substrata, the jar and the cloth. Nor can it be due to the produced things (jar and cloth), for they being different cannot be the cause of the common notion. Nor again can it be due to the agent, for that too differs with different things. Hence that something to which the notion is due is *Kāla*. This *Kāla* has to be *one*, in order that it may produce the common notion even when actions and things differ.

Granted that time being one, could well determine two different actions and give us the common notion: the jar is produced late, the cloth is produced late, but how could it, being one, give us two distinct notions such as: it is done soon, it is done late? To this Bhartṛhari's reply is recorded in following *Kārikā*.

*anityasya yathotpāde pāratantryam tathā sthitaui  
vināśāyaiva tat sṛṣṭam asvādhūnasthitiṁ viduḥ*<sup>65</sup>

This he explains on the analogy of a balance, which though one, determines the varying weights of gold, silver, etc., similarly time, though one, comes to have manifoldness by virtue of the powers inherent in it and determines uninterrupted action diversified by such distinct operations as winking. Or time, the absolute time, determines action as soon or late, quick or slow, just as the hand of the practised adept determines a particular weight. As the hand is competent to weigh by reason of the skill born of practice, time is capable of measuring the dif-



ference in actions by virtue of its own inherent power.

The Vaiśeṣika has his own way of inferring the existence of times. This is set forth in a number of *Kārikās* (III.9. 16.-22). The *Kārikā* 22 says that as objects depend upon causes, material, instrumental and others for their production, so they depend upon a cause for their existence. The meaning is that an object which is produced, is artificial, is from its very nature perishable and world perish.as soon as it is produced, if it is not sustained by a cause. And that sustaining cause is time. This argument of the Vaiśeṣika the whole is different from the parts of which it is composed. So it cannot be urged that a piece of cloth (the whole) is sustained by the hundreds of threads of which it is made.

### The Bhāṣyakāra's View as given by Bhartṛhari

The Bhāṣyakāra's view is embodied in *Kārikā*

*mūrlīnām tena bhinnānām ācayāpacayāḥ prthak  
lakṣyante pariṇāmena sarvāsām bhedayoninā*<sup>66</sup>

of the *Kāla Samuddeśa*. It says that it is time which causes the quantitative change in all objects. It is because of time that there is orderly development or decay noticed in youth or old age. It also tells us that time is one, though it comes to be differentiated by external objects in relation to it. By limiting the function of time of finite objects, Bhartṛhari wants to say that eternal objects are not affected by time. The Bhāṣyakāra has expressed himself similarly. Says he: 'That which causes development and decay in finite objects, is, they say, *kāla - yena mūrlīnām upacayāś cāpacayāś ca lakṣyante tam kalam āhuḥ*<sup>67</sup> On this Kaiyaṭa says: 'Now we see developments, now decay in things such as grass, creepers, trees; other causes remaining the same. What this change (*pariṇāma*) is due to, is time-*tarutrṇalatāprabhṛlīnām kadācid upacayo*' *nyadā tv apacayāḥ, sa pratyayāntaraviśeṣe'pi yatkṛtaḥ sa kālaḥ*. If time is one, how are we to account for the use of such terms as day, night, etc.? To this the Bhāṣyakāra's answer is that it is due to the motion of the sun; *tayaiva kayācit kriyayā yuktasyāhar iti ca bhavati rātrir iti ca kayā kriyayā? Adityagatyā* Elsewhere, *ekātvenāsya karyavācītyantīyamakālvāpāpātīti* <sup>68</sup> *iti*



*bhāṣyalakṣaṇānupapattiyā kṣaṇādhārarūpakāla iti yuktam*<sup>68</sup> the Bhāṣyakāra declares that time is eternal.

It is interesting to observe here that Nāgeśabhaṭṭa, the grammarian-philosopher does not accept the view of the Bhāṣyakāra. To him, time is neither one, nor eternal and all-pervading. If time is one, argues he, it would not be possible to account for the diversity of effects produced; hence time must be held to be a stream of moments. Nor can time be maintained to be eternal, all-pervasive, etc., for time is said to be the cause of various objects in so far as it forms their substratum, of such notion as 'now there is jar,' and if a qualification of it is to be assumed, then we shall have to assume another determination for that qualification, and still another for this second; and so on ad infinitum.<sup>69</sup>

### The Sāṃkhya View as given by Bhartṛhari

In the section on the Buddhist's view, we will observe that the Sāṃkhyas and the Buddhists deny that time has an objective reality. But Bhartṛhari records a view recognizing the existence of time, which commentator ascribes to the Sāṃkhya thinkers, and explains it accordingly. According to this view, three *guṇas*—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are assumed to possess the three powers—past, future and present. These powers do not function at one and the same time. When they do function respectively, they give rise to such usage as 'a thing was', 'a thing is; and 'a thing will be'. These powers are inseparable and non-distinct from the three *guṇas*. They are present everywhere and are ultimately of the form of succession. The past and future powers remove things away from our consciousness and make them invisible, while the power called present brings things into our consciousness.

Things disappear because of the working of the past and future powers and never return. What reappears is a semblance of them; similar things recur but never the same. Yet what we conceive as non-existent has only disappeared and has never ceased to exist. Hence ultimately there is no difference between 'being', and 'non-being', although the modes of existence may differ. All this has been summed up beautifully by Bhartṛhari

in his *Kārikās*.<sup>70</sup>



## The Astronomers' View as given by Bhartṛhari

Others who claim to know what time is, understand by the term *Kāla*, the movement of the sun, the planets and the stars, diversified by diverse revolution.<sup>71</sup> That means the movement of the sun from dawn to dusk makes a day, from dusk to dawn makes a night, fifteen such cycles make a fortnight and thirty of them a month and so on. Similarly when the moon has traversed all the 27 planets, it makes a month, and when Bṛhaspati completes its revolution round a single *Rāśi* (asterism), it make a year. Since it is the movement of the planets that leads to the division of time, this movement itself is looked upon as time by some of the thinkers, the astronomers, whom Helārāja rightly dubs as having a short-range vision; *ity arvāgdarśanāḥ kecin manyante*<sup>72</sup> Though not falling in with this view, Bhartṛhari does not refute it. On the contrary, he seeks to answer some of the objections raised against it, as we shall presently see.

According to these thinkers, action that measures another action is also *Kāla*, so far as that particular action is concerned. The movement of the sun, etc., called the day and the like, and the milking of the cow, etc., having a well-defined duration is a measure for another action of unknown duration, such as sitting. It is therefore *Kāla*

*kriyāraparicchede pravṛttā yā kriyām prati  
nirjñātaparimāṇā sā kāla ityabhidhīyate*<sup>73</sup>

An example will make it clear. We say : *godoham āste*, which means: 'he sits as long as the cows are milked.' Now, the milking of the cows limits the period of sitting. It does the function of time and is therefore recognized as time.

Now if time is nothing but the movement of the sun, the planets, etc. we are faced with the question: How is it that a meditating Yogī shut up in his cell, with his senses drawn in, as the tortoise draws in its limbs, is aware of time? Certainly he does not perceive the movements of the sun, etc., or the dripping of water from a jar. How does he know then on leaving his *samādhi* or meditation that he had been meditating, some one approaches and disturbs him, the Yogī exclaims rather sadly "It is soon that my *samādhi* has been interrupted." How



does he measure time? How can he use the terms *ciram* (late) and *kṣipram* (soon), which are meaningless without the awareness of time.

To this, Bhartṛhari's answer reads as follows: Action is reflected in the mind, and then the reflected (and uninterrupted) moments of action are fused into one concept. This fusing itself is the measure of the movement of breath; hence it is *Kāla*, as it gives the notion of time that has elapsed even in the absence of external motion as that of the sun.

### The Buddhist's View as given by Bhartṛhari

Now there are certain schools of thought which do not recognize *Kāla* as an independent entity. Such are the Buddhists, the Sāṃkhya, and the Vendāntins. They argue that since the indivisible, unitary time is never the object of our parlance, and since actions, etc., which go to qualify time and diversify it, are really instrumental in human conduct there is little use in assuming the abstract invisible time which lacks all proof. If it be urged that because without the assumed *Kāla*, *vyavahāra* (all human activity) is not possible, then they say: Let us accept it as an intellectual construction or a conceptual fusion of the various acts which would account for the use of the language such as slow, quick, etc. This view is recorded by Bhartṛhari in III. 9. 87. The plain meaning is that time is purely subjective.<sup>74</sup> \*\*\*\* It is an intellectual fiction. The human mind pieces together the series of actions and the result is such notions as moment, day, month, etc. and the corresponding conventional language. The *Tattvasaṅgraha* by Śāntarakṣita repudiates time in a couple of *Kārikās* (629-630). According to the commentator, Kamalaśīla, they purport to mean that a particular impression (*ābhoga saṃskāra-viśeṣa*) is created in the mind of the hearers when they are addressed with the suggestive words: this is prior, this is posterior with reference to things or events emerging in a sequence. This impression leads to the knowledge that the things thus referred to are prior or posterior. Thus temporal as well as positional priority and posteriority being otherwise conceivable, both *Kāla* and *Dik* (space) are rejected by the Buddhists. Moreover, both time and space being originally (fundamentally) indivisible neither of them could



be prior or posterior. If this priority or posteriority primarily belong to other objects such as a flame, a body, etc. and only secondarily it is there in time and space by transference, then too they are dispensable.

Bhartṛhari simply takes note of this view and does not refute it, as indeed he does elsewhere. He accommodates variety of philosophical views. In *Kārikā* III.9. 58. he says: whether time is merely *jñānānugataśakti viz., buddhyanusamhāra*, a conceptual fusion or something positive, the truth is that we cannot do without time. All our activities are simply impossible without reference to time; the take place in time.

### The Reality of the Present Time according to Bhartṛhari.

Following closely the Bhāṣyakāra, Bhartṛhari recognizes the three-fold division of time into the present, the past and the future. This division, he affirms, is empirical, yet he declares emphatically that there is no escape from it.<sup>75\*\*\*\*</sup> All action is cast in the form of one or another of these time-divisions. Time as conditioned by action which began but which is finished is 'past'; when the means of production of an action are ready and the action is expected; we say it is future. When however an action has begun but has not concluded, we say it is present time. According to Kaiyaṭa, the past, the present and the future are merely particular moods of existence.<sup>76 \*\*\*\*</sup> Hence the future changes into the present and the present changes into the past. By existence Kaiyaṭa means not only real existence, but also ideal. It is the tree conceived by the mind and existing in it that is affirmed, denied or produced. Things absolutely non-existent such as the hare's horn are conceived by the mind, and are referred to by their names. This ideal or conceptual existence appears externally as material existence. If words such as 'tree' were to express only external existence, then it would do to say 'a tree' and it would be redundant to say, 'a tree is.' Again it would be a contradiction to say 'a tree is not'. And it would not be reasonable to speak as we do, 'a sprout has sprung up', for what is, cannot be said to be becoming. But once we accept the view of Kaiyaṭa, the use of *asti*, and *nāsti*, etc., has a purpose; it is there to denote the existence, etc., of the thing outside the mind.



But here Kaiyaṭa raises an interesting question: Can we qualify existence (*Sattā*) as future existence or past existence, or as existence of the future time, etc.? *Sattā*, which is derived from the present participle of *as* 'to be' necessarily implies the present. The existent is necessarily the present in an absolute sense; hence it would be inconsistent to talk of future or past existence. But if it be urged that the futurity or pastness of the substrata in which existence resides could justify the use of such expressions as future existence; we say, even the existence (*Sattā*) would not be present. Hence expressions like 'he had cows', 'he will have cows' are incapable of replacement by *gomān*, wherein the possessive suffix is enjoined in the sense of the present.<sup>77</sup>

The Bhāṣyakāra gives a very beautiful answer to all this. He explains the use of the future, past and present with regard to one and the same existent thing on the basis of its conjunction with the senses or absence of it. 'There are two different actions, one of the senses, the other of the mind. The action of the senses is approach, conjunction or contact. The action of the mind is conceiving. A person anxious to go to Pāṭaliputra says : " On the way to Pāṭaliputra which I am to traverse, there will be a well". When he had reached the well, he says: " The well is", when he leaves it behind and proceeds further, he says: "The well was". In all this, when we have this action of the senses (conjunction), we have the past and the future tenses (with their varieties): when, however, there is the action of the mind, we have the present tense.<sup>78</sup>

All this is summed up by Bhartṛhari in a couple of *Kārikās* (III. 9. 112, 113), and lucidly explained by Helārāja. The plain meaning of the first *Kārikā* is that existence is qualified by conjunction with the senses; for all linguistic usage is governed by the relation which a thing has with another in conjunction with it. As explained by Helārāja, a thing (*Sattā*) becomes predicable only when we perceive it, for so long as it is not perceived, it is in no way different from nonexistent. And, perception is possible only when there is conjunction with a sense. Hence when this conjunction is yet to be, in other words, when on the way, the well is yet to have conjunction with the sense



of vision, we say: "a well will be". When this conjunction has already been there, we say: "The well was" When the conjunction takes place presently, we say: "The well is".

Now as the future and past times do not encroach upon the sphere of the present, the present too should not encroach upon theirs, and when the conjunction with a sense has already been effected or has yet to be effected, it should not be possible to say: "The well is". To this, Bhartṛhari gives a reply in the next *Kārikā*. The mind conceives things as merely existent, and therefore there could be no bar to the use of the be, the proper spheres of the past and future tenses.

Now the objector says that we cannot speak of the present with respect to things that have been ever-existing, for there is no division of time in their case." For instance, we should not say: "The mountains stand" But against this, it may be urged that the present which is *nowness* is an antithesis of the past and the future. Since things which have been ever-existing have neither the past nor the future time, the present is there by its very nature and in its own right, and needs no support from any quarter. To this the critic's reply is that these appellations, the past, the future and the present, apply only to things which are influenced by time ;and these are the things that have an origin. These appellations are explainable only on the basis of origination having a definite limit. Thus things or events are called future, when the means are present and production is expected; they are present, when after origination they persist; and they are past, when after origination they have perished. The appellation present, therefore, stands between the past and the future. Where there no past and future, there is no present either; for the present is antithetical to the past and the future, as declared by the Bhāṣyakāra.<sup>80</sup> Since things which are constant have no past and future, there is no present, so far as they are concerned. Not only that. Since there is no time-division in their case, there is no action, conditioning time. Action is a process, which determines time.

To this the Bhāṣyakāra's reply is : Yes, there are time-divisions even in their case.<sup>81</sup> How? The actions of the kings (the motions of the sun, etc.) past, future and present, are the sub-



stratum of the standing of the mountains. This explains such expression as the mountains will stand, the mountains stand; the mountains stood.

Bhartṛhari elucidates this reply in a couple of *Kārikās* (III.9. 8. 81). Things come to be differentiated by relation with other kings, not by themselves. Hence the standing of the mountains, the flowing of the rivers, etc. is qualified by the existence of the other thing related to them. The actions of the Kings, etc. are said to be the substratum of the standing of the mountains, etc.; for they qualify them. As the actions of the Kings, etc. belong to three different periods, they possess succession and are of the nature of a process; the actions such as the standing of the mountains, by their relation with them, are assumed to possess the same characteristics; hence the secondary use of the three tenses stands justified and, therefore, there could be no objection to the use of the present tense.<sup>82</sup>

Bhartṛhari offers an alternative explanation in *Kārikā*<sup>83</sup>. Actions such as cooking, splitting, etc. are known to have distinct parts—actions within them—and therefore have a sequence in time. Placing the pot on the earth and the like are the distinct parts of cooking, lifting (the implement etc.) of the action of splitting. But the actions of standing of the mountains and the like, which do have parts but which being similar (non-distinct) are difficult to cognize, are shown to have succession and therefore different periods by the actions of the kings, etc. which consist of distinct parts and are known to belong to different periods. Hence the actions of the Kings, etc. being determinations of the standing of the mountains, etc. are said to be their substrata and define their time. How the *Parvata-sthiti* is action, is explained by Bhartṛhari himself in III.8. 26. The fact of even constant things being sustained by their substratum every moment, even when there is no sequence, is nothing different from origination (*janma*) which is doubtless action (*kriyā*).

Again the objector points out that there is little justification for the use of the Present Tense when an action goes on because of the non-achievement of the principal purpose, but which comes to an end and becomes a thing of the past, as the



agent begins some other action or actions. It should not be reasonable to say 'we are living here', 'we are here performing a sacrifice for Puṣyamitra'. The priest, even when he is busy otherwise and is not performing the sacrifice, speaks thus, as he is still intent on performing the sacrifice, for he has not achieved the purpose, viz., the sacrificial fee. The Bhāṣyakāra replies that action is understood to be present, so long as the principal object is not achieved, it does not cease because some other actions which have their own distinct purpose, intervene. Hence the use of the Present Time is perfectly justified. But if it be insisted on that there is interruption by the intervening actions hence, the action is no longer present, but is past, the Bhāṣyakāra says that even if intervention is interruption the action is present, not past. When we speak of Devadatta as: 'Devadatta eats' we know that while he is eating, he now smiles, now talks and now drinks water. Yet no denying the fact that the action of eating belongs to the present. If interruption does not affect the continuity of action in this case, why should it do in other cases?

This view of the present is explained by Bhartṛhari in a couple of *Kārikās*. <sup>44</sup> (III.9.82, 83). As explained by Helārāja, eating etc. is not a single action, it consists of a number of parts which follow one another in succession. This action seems to break off because of the intervening actions such as smiling, talking, etc.; yet it does not, for, unless there is satisfaction, the continuity of eating has to be recognized. As a matter of fact, the whole is not interrupted but the moments, past and future. And, they alone do not make action. The interruption is only apparent, for, there could be no cessation unless the fruit was achieved. A collection (series) of moments ending with its fruit such as seeing, is action. Even when physical action has ceased, mental action such as the desire to see continues till the former bears fruit; hence there is, in fact, no cessation. The use of the Present Tense, therefore, has its justification.

There is yet another way of showing how other actions coming in between, do not interfere with the continuity of the (principal) action such as eating which, therefore, goes on in the present. The various intervening actions, such as eating,



since they are secondary and helpful like sipping, etc. And parts do not intercept the whole. Surely Devadatta is not intercepted by his own limbs.<sup>85</sup>

Now the objector turns a thorough sceptic and challenges the very existence of the present. He asserts that there is no such thing as the present time. He argues: Action that is finished is past, and that not yet finished (or undertaken) is future, but we cannot conceive of anything that is neither finished nor unfinished, there being no intermediate stage. Besides the past and the future, therefore, there is nothing else in between.<sup>86</sup> In other words, action is the state of being effected. In the course of this process, the moment that is past, existed and action for that moment was accordingly past; the moment that does not exist, is yet to come and be effected, the action qualified by that moment is future. And there is no such moment as may be both existent and nonexistent, for that would be self-contradictory.

Again all action being imperceptible and only inferrable from its outcome is necessarily past and could be denoted only by the past tense. Rightly an intelligent young thinker addresses a crow the question: 'How are we to define your flight? Surely *patasi* (flies) cannot be said of your flight in the past, for that is over, nor can it be spoken of your light in the future, for that too does not exist. The use of *patasi* would be justified only if the flight lay in the present. Were it so, we shall have to say that the whole world moves likewise and that the Himālayas too move.<sup>86</sup> That would be indeed absurd.

Then there is a view of the ancients (which one should also honour) that there is no movement in the world; hence no time including the present. The ancients declare:

The wheel does not move, the arrow is not thrown, the rivers do not flow to the sea, the whole world is motionless and there is no active agent: he who views the state of thing thus is also not blind. The idea is repeated in a slightly different way: In all the three division of time, there is no motion; how then do we say: "He goes." <sup>87</sup> If it be urged, says the objector, that action is present because it is there as it (action) is a state of being effected, a process, he would say that this too was unten-



able ; for a single thing by itself incapable of differentiation is not possessed of succession, which is action. And thing *is* or *is not*. What is, is not to be effected and, therefore, does not possess succession. What is not, could not in that condition of non-being, be capable of being effected and therefore possessed of succession. Surely a non-existent thing, devoid as it is of all properties, could not have any succession. There being no third category of things, there is *no one thing* that may be characterized as a state of being effected and, therefore, possessed of succession. How could it be then present<sup>88</sup>?

Again, if it be assumed that moments possessed of sequence, some prior; others posterior, constitute action and that this action continuing till fruition must be admitted to be in the present, even this assumption would be wrong, points out the objector. For, the parts arising in succession are mutually unrelated; they, therefore, are not at all simultaneous. It is only one single moment that is perceived to be present, and that being by itself undifferentiated has no succession. Nor can it be urged that many such successive moments are remembered simultaneously, for that is not possible; because we remember as we perceive and not contrariwise; and the one moment has not been perceived to possess succession, how could then remembrance give you a notion of succession<sup>89</sup>?

Remembrance apart, the various moments could not constitute one single action; for then everything would be both existent and non-existent, but that is not possible. Existence and non-existence are contradictory and exclusive of each other. To obviate this difficulty, we shall have to assume a common attribute of the different moments and this is that we assume that each one of the moments is able to effect action. But this would mean that there are a number of actions, not one. For what is assumed is that many moments have the common attribute, *kriyādharmā*, and not that all of them make one action. Hence the question, how action is present remains still unanswered.<sup>90</sup>

To all this Bhṛṅhari gives the answer in *Kārikā* <sup>91</sup> III. 9.89. Action consisting of a series of moments is assumed to be one. Moments having a definite succession and arising in pursuit of



one definite object are termed action, which is one so long as the object is one. Although the moments are not simultaneous, when one is existent, another is non-existent, still they are present. For by 'present' we do not mean existent, but 'begun and not (yet) finished.' And that is true of that series of moments which continue to arise (and disappear) till fruition and which are unified conceptually. This series of moments alone is capable of producing action. And this is inferable from its outcome. When an aggregate of moments possessed of its characteristic succession is comprehended as existent, then this existence of it, is its presentness. The upshot of all this is: An aggregate of moments possesses succession. Though it is both existent and non-existent; each one of the moments conceived as mutually related by sequence and, therefore, existent, is present. True every moment by itself is not possessed of succession and is, therefore, not action, yet the sequence given rise to by other moments following it, is surely an object of our consciousness; hence there is nothing wrong with it.

The Bhāṣyakāra sums up the case for the present in the following words. The present does exist. It is not perceived like the motion of the sun. Yet it is there. The five lotus-fibres in the inside of a lotus-subtle things are knowable only by inference. We use *gacchati* (he goes), for there is action which is present. How? First, there is action, the desire to achieve something. This mental action and to physical action. Both these actions, mental and physical, prior and posterior, ending with the production of the fruit are unified by the mind which has the power of piecing things together and presented as one action. The use of the Present Tense in *gacchati* is, therefore, perfectly justified.<sup>91</sup>

That an aggregate of moments held together by the one common purpose is one action in the present has already been shown. Now, Bhartṛhari proceeds to show that an aggregate of moments does make one action otherwise also. This oneness is possible, for the mind is by virtue of the permanence of the impression created by perception, capable of piecing together even such things as are perceived in succession. Hence when an aggregate of actions with loose-hung parts is transferred to



the mind and made into one concept, it is understood as present and one, being identified with the one concept.<sup>92</sup> If this is not conceded, absence of knowledge of the parts constituting the whole would result. It is true that remembrance is invariably based upon perception; but it is not true that things perceived in succession cannot be remembered simultaneously; for if it be so, we should have no notion of a hundred, etc. The reflex in the mind being looked upon as a concept leads us to say that there is one present time outside the mind. Once the present time is established, the past and the future also exist beyond doubt, as they are relative to the present.

### Orthodox Philosophical School

Barring the Vaiśeṣika system, and the now extinct school of *Kālavāda*, the concept of time has not been discussed in great details in any other system of Indian Philosophy. Not that it is barren in this respect; as a matter of fact, it is a blooming orchard wherein blossom forth many a problem of Metaphysics. Any scholar, therefore, who undertakes the study of the different schools of philosophy even with a narrow and limited perspective is sure to find himself amply rewarded provided he takes care not to get embroiled in a quagmire to endless discussion. We have studied a number of works belonging to these schools and traced a number of references to the concept of time. On these we have based certain conclusions. They are given hereunder:

#### *Sāṃkhya*<sup>93</sup>

According to the God-disbelieving *Sāṃkhyas* *Kāla* does not exist. This we learn from *Ratnaprabhā*, a commentary on the *Śārirakabhāṣya*<sup>94</sup> by Śaṅkarācārya which towards the end of the first *Sūtra* explicitly says ; *Sāṃkhyaiḥ kālasyāna-ṅgikārāt*. Vācaspati Miśra fully explains why the *Sāṃkhyas* do not accept *Kāla*. Says he :

*kālā ca vaiśeṣikābhimata eko nānāgatādibhedavya-  
vahāraṃ pravartayitum arhati । tasmād ayaṃ yair  
upādhibhedair anāgatādivyavahārābhedam pratipa-  
dyate, santu ta evopādhayo, nāgatādivyavahāra-  
hetavaḥ, kṛtam antargaṇākāleneti sāṃkhyācāryaḥ  
tasmān na kālārūpatattvāntarābhyupagama iti.*



*Kāla* as conceived by the Vaiśeṣikas cannot be the cause of such usage as *anāgata* (not come, i.e. future). Therefore, let those limiting adjuncts by virtue of which *Kāla* leads to variety of usage such as *anāgata* be themselves regarded as the cause. There is, therefore, no use in assuming the superfluous *Kāla*, say the teachers of Sāṃkhya. Hence another substance *Kāla*, is not to be accepted."

There are several other views or theories about *Kāla* in the God-disbelieving (*nirīśvara*) Sāṃkhya. One of these is that *Kāla* is not altogether non-existent, and is an evolute of *Prakṛti*. The *Mṛgendravṛttidīpikā* says:

*pariṇāmaḥ pṛthagbhāvo vyavasthākramataḥ sadā ||  
bhūtaisadyadvartamānātmā kālarūpo vibhāvvyate ||*<sup>95</sup>

That this view did not appeal to other Sāṃkhya teachers is clear from the statement of the *Mṛgendravṛttidīpikā* itself when it repudiates this. Says it :

*sāṃkhyābhyupagatas tāvat kālo na yuktaḥ | yato  
bhoktur bhogādhikaraṇatvena sthitāyās tanor  
vṛddhitaruṇādyavasthaya'numīyate pariṇativya-  
tiriktaḥ kālaḥ |*<sup>96</sup>

"Time as accepted by the Sāṃkhyas cannot be maintained since one is to infer from the stages of growth, youth etc. of the body which is the substratum of the experiences of the experiencing self, that *Kāla* is the thing other than the modification of *Prakṛti*."

There is another view about *Kāla*, viz., *Kāla* is nothing but *Prakṛti*, otherwise known as *Pradhāna*. Thus says Madhvā - cārya, "Since the *Pradhāna* theory recognizes only twenty five principles, which do not cover the principle of *Kāla*, the *Pradhāna* itself has to be called *Kāla*":

*Pradhānavāde pañcaviṃśatitattvebhyo bahirbhūtasya  
kālatattvasyābhāvāt pradhānam eva kālaśabdena  
vyavahriyatām |*<sup>97</sup>

Another view accepts *Kāla* as merely action. The *Yukidīpikā* expressly says: There is no such thing as *Kāla*: it is only the actions that get the designation of *Kāla*.<sup>98</sup>

There is a Sāṃkhya Sūtra *dikkālāv ākāśādibhyaḥ*<sup>99</sup> (2. 12.). The Bhāṣyakāra Vijñānabhikṣu interprets this and the way he



does it, show that he accepts *Kāla* as both *nitya* and *anitya*, eternal and non-eternal. Says he :

*dikkālāv ākāśādibhyaḥ । nityau yau dikkālau tāv  
ākāśaprakṛtibhūtau prakṛter guṇaviśeṣāv eva । ato  
dikkālayor vibhutvopapattiḥ । yau tu khaṇḍadikkālau  
tau tattadupādhismyogād ākāśād utpadyete ityarthah  
। ādiśabdenopādhipgrahaṇād iti । yady api tattadupā-  
dhiviśiṣṭākāśam eva khaṇḍadikkālau tathāpi  
viśiṣṭasyātirikatatābhyupagamavād eva vaiśeṣikanaye  
śrotrasya kāryatāvat tatkāryatvam atroktaḥ ।*<sup>99</sup>

The space and time which are eternal are the *Prakṛti* (the primary cause) and ether (*Ākāśa*) and are no more than the *guṇas* of *Prakṛti*. Hence space and time are justifiably *vibhu* (all-pervasive). The space and time which are parts, proceed, however, from *Ākāśa* on coming into contact with manifold limiting adjuncts. Although *Ākāśa* as conditioned by the various limiting adjuncts is the space and time in parts, still what is conditioned is looked upon as something distinct. They (*Khaṇḍadikkālau*) are, therefore, here said to have been created as the ear is held as a creation by the *Vaiśeṣikas*.

Aniruddhabhaṭṭa, however, does not accept twofold *Kāla*. Says he :

*tattadupādhibhedād ākāśam eva dikkālaśabdavācyaḥ  
। tamād ākāśe 'ntarbhūtau ।*<sup>100</sup>

Because of the various limiting adjuncts *Ākāśa* itself is expressed by the words *dik* and *kāla*, hence both time and space are contained in the *Ākāśa*. The great Vedāntin Mahādeva, too, agrees with Aniruddhabhaṭṭa.<sup>101</sup>

There is another view expounded in the *Vṛttānta* which will close the list of various views in the *Nirīśvara Sāṃkhya*. It is :

*kālaś ca bhūtaḥ, bhavad, bhviṣyad iti vyavhriyamā-  
napadārthavyatirekeṇa na svatanthro 'sti*<sup>101</sup>

*Kāla* is nothing besides, and independent of, objects spoken of as past, present and future. So an object like a jar spoken of as past is the past time, the object spoken of as present is the present time and so on.



## Yoga

The followers of Patañjali who belong to the God-believing Sāṃkhya school accept only *kṣaṇa* or moment as time while saying that all times like the *muhūrtta*, *yāma*, day and night are mental constructions. Vijñānabhikṣu says in his *Yoga Vārttika*: 'Now there is no time besides *kṣaṇa*. Divisions of time beginning with *muhūrtta* and ending with Mahākāla simply do not exist. This is what he incidentally establishes as the settled proposition of his own *Śāstra*. He further says :

*idānīm kṣaṇātiriktaḥ kālo nāsti muhūrttādirūpo  
mahākālaparyyanta iti prasaṅgāt svaśāstrasiddhā-  
ntam avadhārayati । muhūrttāhorādayo buddhika-  
lpitasamāhārā eva ।*<sup>102</sup>

Comment of *Vyāsabhāṣya* on *Sūtra kṣaṇatatkramayoḥ saṁyamād vivedajaṁ jñānam*. (*Pātañjala Yogasūtra*, 3.52.)

"The *muhūrttas*, the days, the nights, etc. are only mental accumulation of *kṣaṇas*". The *Vyāsabhāṣya* here explains the *sūtra kṣaṇatatkramayoḥ*, etc. in a lucid way. Says it: "The *kṣaṇa* and its succession are not comprehended cumulatively in the object. Therefore, the *muhūrttas*, the days, the nights, etc. are comprehended in the mind. Indeed *Kāla* has no factual existence, but is only a mental construction. It is only a *vikalpa* which appears to the common man in abstract meditation. The *kṣaṇa* is a reality".<sup>103</sup> Here we have further comment of Vyāsa :

*apakarṣaparyantaṁ dravyaṁ paramāṇuḥ ।....  
tatpravāhāvicchedas tu kramah, kṣaṇatatkramayoḥ  
nāsti vastusamāhāra iti..... tenaikena kṣaṇena kṛtsno  
lokaḥ parināmam anubhavati ।*<sup>103</sup>

"A moment (*kṣaṇa*) is the ultimate minimum of time. It cannot be further divided up and the continuous flow of such moments is their course (*krama*)..... Their uninterrupted course is what is called time.... The whole world passes through a mutation in only one moment, so all the external qualities of the world are relative to this present moment."

## Mīmāṃsā

In *Mīmāṃsā* the concept of *Kāla* is treated according to its two school of the Bhāṭṭas and the Prābhākaras. We first deal



with the Bhāṭṭa school.

### The Bhāṭṭas

The *Bhāṭṭa* school recognizes *Kāla* as a substance. It is eternal and all-pervasive. Though one, it gets appellations of *kṣaṇa* (moment), *māsa* (month), etc. on account of the limiting adjuncts. Again, in spite of its all-pervading character *Kāla* appears to be limited on account of the limiting adjuncts. Thus fifteen winks (*nimeṣas*) make one *kāṣṭhā*, thirty of them make one *muhūrta*, thirty of these make one day, thirty days make a month and twelve months make a year and so on.<sup>104</sup>

Further, the Bhāṭṭas believe that *Kāla* is perceptible by all the six senses. Thus says the *Mānameyodaya* : *sa ca kālaḥ ṣaḍindriyagrāhyaḥ*.<sup>105</sup> *Kāla* is perceptible by the six senses. *Śāstraḍīpikā*, however, differs slightly from this view. It says : *kālo na svātantryeṇendriyair grhyate, atha ca viśayeṣu sveṣu grhyamāneṣu sarvair apīndriyair grhyate* .<sup>105</sup>

*Kāla* is not perceived independently by the senses. But along with the perception of various objects *Kāla* is also perceived as their qualification by all the senses.

That according to this school *Kāla* is perceptible, is also to be gathered from the statement of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī. Says he :

*kālasya ca rūpādhīnasya mīmāṃsakādibhiḥ  
sarvendriyagrāhyatvābhyupagamāt*<sup>106</sup> .

“The Mīmāṃsakas etc. accept *Kāla* as colourless and perceptible by all the senses.”

### Prābhākara

In the Prābhākara school *kāla* is regarded as one, eternal and all-pervading as in the Vaiśeṣika school. In the *Tantra-rahasya* of Rāmānujācārya it is expressly stated :

*tatra cābhyupagamasiddhāntanyāyena kaṇāda-  
tantrasiddha eva prameyavargo' ṅīkriyate, tasya  
tatpratipādanārthaṁ pravṛttatvāt; na tu pṛthag atra  
vyutpādyate । tatrāpyanabhimatānāṃ mprākriyate;  
viśeṣānāṃ tu vyutpādyate* .<sup>107</sup>

“We adopt here the cognizable categories recognised by Kaṇāda in the Vaiśeṣika Darśana. Mainly devoted to their treatment.



Whatever therein does not accord with our view is discarded, the rest is accepted."

After this have been enumerated the very nine substances which the Vaiśeṣikas accept. Among these one is *kāla* is made in any of the texts of this school. We, therefore, presume, keeping in mind the statement of Rāmānujācārya, that the Prābhākaras accept the Vaiśeṣika concept of time in toto.

### Vedānta

Now taking up the Vedānta, we find that the *Brahmasūtra* or the *Śāṅkarabhāṣya* thereon nowhere deal with *Kāla*, though in works of Vedānta such as the *Vedānta Paribhāṣā* we do have a treatment of the empirical objects such as *Ākāśa*. Hence the *Siddhāntabindu* declares : Time and Space have not been noticed, for there is no evidence of their existence.<sup>108</sup> Yet the *Vedānta Paribhāṣā* seems to recognize the empirical time. In order to show that the definition of *Pramā* (correct knowledge) as *anadhigatābādhitārthaviśayajñānatvam*<sup>109</sup> does not suffer from the defect of being too narrow, leading to the exclusion of *dhārāvāhikapratyakṣa* it reads : *nīrūpasyāpi kālasyaen - driyavedyatvābhyupagamenā dhārāvāhikabuddher api pūrvapūrvajñānaviśayatattatkṣaṇaviśeṣaviśiṣṭaviśayaka - tvena na tatrvyāptiḥ*.<sup>110</sup> This means that the author believes in the existence of *Kāla* and holds it as directly perceptible.

According to the Vedāntins *Kāla* is merely *avidyā* (nescience). Thus says Madhusūdana Sarasvatī while commenting on the eighth verse in the *Siddhāntabindu*, *Kāla* is merely *avidyā* for that is the substratum of all.<sup>111</sup>

### Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas

Time is conceived in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system as a unique, all-pervading and eternal substance. It is the static background against which events happen and from which they derive their chronological order. It possesses a specific physical quality like colour and thus cannot be an object of external perception. Neither is it perceived internally, for the mind has no jurisdiction over external or non-psychical objects independently of a physical sense-organ. The question naturally arises: What is the source of our knowledge that time exists? The



Vaiśeṣika answers that the knowledge of time is arrived at by a series of inferences. The notions of priority (*aparatva*) and posteriority (*paratva*), of simultaneity (*yaugapadya*) and succession (*ayaugapadya*) and of quickness (*kṣipratva*) and slowness (*ciratva*) constitute the grounds (*liṅga*) of the inference of the existence of time.<sup>112</sup> The Nyāya Vaiśeṣika gives a comprehensive treatment of *Kāla*. Here we have merely touched on it in its barest outlines. We propose to take it up in fuller details later.<sup>113</sup>

### Sampradāyas

There have been, and still are, many sects in India whose founders have expounded, according to their light many a new view on several metaphysical and mystical problems. These have been further elaborated by their followers with the result that here has grown a mass of literature dealing with sectional doctrines. After wading through it we have found a number of references to the philosophy of time which are highly interesting in the variety and richness of their content. Below we present a brief study of the time-concept as we found it in these *Sampradāyas*.

#### Rāmānuja

We take first the *Rāmānuja Sampradāya*. Here we have three Realities, namely, *Cit*, *Acit*, and *Īśvara*. The *Ācit* is further divided into three parts—pure *sattva*, mixed *sattva* and void *sattva* (*śuddha sattvam*, *mniśrasattvam*, *sattvaśūnyam ceti*). Out of these *Kāla* is *sattvaśūnya*. It is the cause of the modification of *Prakṛti* and its evolutes and is itself modified as *kāla*, *kāṣṭhā*, etc. It is eternal. It is Lord' field of activity and His body.<sup>114</sup>

In another work of this *Sampradāya*, the following definition of *Kāla* is given:

*añitādivyavahārahetuḥ kālaḥ । kālīkena sarvādhāra-  
tvam tallakṣaṇam.*<sup>115</sup>

“*Kāla* is the basis for such parlance as past. *Kāla* is so called because it is the substratum of everything in so far as everything is comprehended by it.”



Here *Prakṛti*, *Puruṣa* and *Kāla* are regarded as the play-things of the Lord (*Parameśituḥ kṛdāparikaraḥ*). *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* become means with which the Lord effects His purpose, viz., the creation and the dissolution of the Universe. *Kāla* does merely an assisting job. It is a mere *aide* as says the *Yatīndramatadīpikā*:

*evambhūtaḥ kāla īśvarasya kṛdāparikaro bhavati  
līlāvibhūtaḥ īśvaraḥ kālādhina eva kāryaṁ karoti*<sup>116</sup>

“Thus defined *Kāla* is the Lord’s field of activity. In display of His (painless) activity the Lord effects His purpose with the help of *Kāla*.”

The implication of the above statement of the *Dīpikā* evidently is that it is only in Lord’s playful activity (*Līlāvibhūti*) that *Kāla* is of any use, in eternal divine glory (*Nityavibhūti*), *Kāla* is super fluous.<sup>117</sup>

Time is one indivisible entity. As it is so, it is deemed to have undergone modifications such as *kṣaṇa*, *lava* and it is possible to carry on with the all-pervading (time). The modifications such as *kṣaṇa* are perceived in all objects. On this it has been said :

*kālasyaikasyaiva kṣaṇenāśya viśvasyāpi viśeṣaṇāt  
kālavat tatkṣaṇānāñ ca vyāpitvam avaśiṣyate*<sup>118</sup>  
'keci tu śadindriyavedyaḥ kāla ity apy āhuḥ'.<sup>119</sup>

“As all this is qualified by the one moment (*kṣaṇa*) the moments of time are, like time itself, held to be pervasive.”

Some, however, affirm that *Kāla* is comprehensible by the six senses. A pot is, for it is an object of ocular perception, as admitted by all. Being is here no more than being related to time.

A few teachers of this school accept *Kāla* as one and eternal in both the *Vibhūtis* : *Līlāvibhūti* and *Nityavibhūti*, of the Lord and believe that one, eternal, and all-pervading time gets appellations of moment (*kṣaṇa*) etc. on account of the limiting adjuncts, of solar motion, etc, They say :

*ayaṁ ca kālaḥ atindriyavedyaḥ ghaṭaḥ sann iti  
cākṣuṣādīprāṇīteḥ sarvasiddhatvāt, tatra sattvasya  
kālasambandhitvamātrarūpatvatī*



*ayaṁ ca kālo nityo vibhur eka eva kṣaṇādivyavahāras  
tu ekasyāpy upādhibhedād upapadyate*<sup>120</sup>.

In essentials this view seems to be influenced by the Vaiśeṣika system.

### Vallabha

The *Ācāryās* of the Vallabha saṁpradāya do not accept *Kāla* as a separate entity. According to them *Kāla* is non-distinct from Brahman. It is Brahman itself. As the Vidvanmaṇḍana says:

yadi kālasyāpi Brahmatvam eva manuṣe tadā on iti brūmah  
ata eva “kālosmi” ti (Sṛīmadbhāgavadgī tā, II.32.)—  
bhagavadvākyaṁ ‘kālarūp’vatirṇa” i tyādy api<sup>121</sup>

‘If you think *Kāla* too is nothing but *Brahman*, then we say: “We agree”. Hence the Lord says—“I am time”. (Gītā II. 32) and also that ‘I have manifested myself as *Kāla*,’ etc.,

Just as the Vaiśeṣikas accept *Kāla* as one eternal and independent substance and believe that the empirical divisions of it into moments, hours, days, etc. are caused by the limiting adjunct of solar motion, etc. so do the teachers of this school accept *Brahman* as the one entity with which they equate *Kāla* and believe that the divisions of it into moments, etc. are likewise, limitations (*upādhibhedas*) caused by solar motion.

### Mādhva

In the Mādhvasampradāya *Kāla* is believed to be a substance. The *Padārthasaṅgraha* of Padmanābha enumerates ten substances (*Dravyas*)<sup>122</sup> of which one is *Kāla*. The function of *Kāla* is to limit the living period of beings, (*āyurvyavasthāpakah kālāḥ*). That is why God (*Paramātmā*) and (*muktas*) have no limited period of existence (*āyurmaryyādā*) for, their connection with time is non-existent (*kālasambandhābhāvāt*). Time, the *Ācāryas* of this school say, is not one but many, assuming different forms like *kṣaṇa* (moment), *lava*, etc. (*kṣaṇa-lavādyanekarūpaḥ*). According to a section of this school *Kāla* is entity created and destroyed and hence non-eternal. They say: *Kālopādānaṁ prakṛtir eva*. Some other among them contradict them and affirm: *Kālopādānaṁ*



*na prakṛtiḥ purva-pūrvvakāla evottarottarakālopādānam*

This view is repudiated in the *Mādhvasiddhāntasāra*<sup>123</sup> with clear and forceful arguments. Not only is *Kāla* not destroyed, it is believed to be existent even at the time of the dissolution of the creation. The *Bhāgavata* says :

*sontaḥśarīre'pitabhūtasūkṣmaḥ  
kālātmikāṁ śaktim udīrayāṇaḥ*

*Kāla* in this school is believed to be its own substratum and the proof for this is the notions like 'now it is morning, (*idānīm prātaḥ*). It is also the substratum of all and the proof for this is the notions like 'now there is a pitcher' (*idānīm ghaṭaḥ*). Although *Kāla* is believed to be created by God (vide *Bhāgavata* passage quoted above) it is eternal and ever-recurrent (continuum).

In the Mādhva school all *Padārthas* are believed to be perceivable. Soul, Mind and Time are directly perceived while Sound (*Śabda*) etc. are perceived with the help of the sense-organs.<sup>124</sup> *Kāla*, therefore, according to the Mādhvas, is a perceptual datum.

### Nimbārka

The *Ācāryas* of the Nimbārka school accept three categories of *Cit*, *Acit* and *Māyā*. Of these *Acit* is divided into *Prākṛta*, *Āprākṛta* and *Kāla*. *Kālā* is therefore, defined as a nonsentient substance, different from *Prākṛta* and *Āprākṛta*. It is further described as eternal, all-pervasive and cause for such usage as past, present and future.

We do not find any detailed references to time in this school which may deserve notice. We, therefore, leave it and pass on to our next topic of discussion : the concept of time in unorthodox philosophical schools.

### Unorthodox schools

After having studied the concept of time in the orthodox Brahmanical systems of thought, we now turn our attention to how it is in three systems ; Jainism, Buddhism and Cārvāka.

### Jainism

In the Jaina philosophy *Kāla* is as much a real substance as



the five others, viz., *Jīva*, *Dharma*, *Adharma*, *Pudgala* and *Ākāśa*.<sup>125</sup> It is described as the accompanying cause or condition (*sahakārikāraṇa*) or *asamavāyikāraṇa*, as the Vaiśeṣikas call it, of the modification of substances.

There was, however, a school among the Jainas which did not believe in the independent existence of time. Thus, for example, Kundakundācārya, the great Jain thinker in his twenty-fifth *Gāthā* defines empirical time and then does not say whether time is included in the *Pudgala Dravya* or not.

In the *Tattvatraya* too this view is presented as the first proposition which is sought to be rejected.<sup>126</sup> Although later on this is repudiated, yet it serves its purpose to show that there existed a school among the older Jainas which subscribed to the view that time as a substance exists. That some Jaina teachers do not accept time as a substance is also shown by Guṇaratna when he says :

*ye kecanācāryāḥ kālām dravyam nābhyupayanti kintu  
dharmādidravyāṇām paryāyam eva, tanmate  
dharmādharmākāśapudgalaḥjīvākhyapañcāstikāyālmako  
lokaḥi ye tu kālām dravyam icchanti tanmate  
śaḍdravyālmako lokaḥi pañcānām dharmādidra-  
vyāṇām kāladravyasya ca tatra sadbhāvāt*<sup>126</sup>

“Those of the teachers who do not recognize the substance *Kāla*, but regard it as a *dharma*-like substance view this world as constituted of five *āstikāyas* of *dharma*, *adharma*, *pudgala*, *jīva*. Those who hold *Kāla* as a substance look upon this world as made up of six substances.”

The two sects among the Jainas seem to be at variance on the acceptability of time. The Digambaras among them seem to accept it as they read the *Sūtra* as *kālaś ca* (*Tattvārthasūtra* 5.38) ‘time is’; the Śvetāmbaras among them do not seem to agree with this for they read the *Sūtra* with a variant *kālaś cety eke*, ‘some say time is’.

### Buddhism

The Buddhists do not accept *Kāla*. Varavaramuni clearly says— “The Buddhists and others believe that there is no *Kāla*”. The same idea is expressed in *Brahmavidyābhaṛaṇa* in the following words:



*bauddhānām mate kṣaṇapadena ghaṭādir eva padārtho vyavahriyate, na tu tadatiriktaḥ kaścit kṣaṇo nāma kālo 'sti... kṣaṇikaḥ padārtha iti vyavahāras tu bhedakalpanayā*<sup>127</sup>.

The Buddhists assert that *kṣaṇa* is no other than objects such as a jar. There is no time such as a *kṣaṇa*. 'A thing is momentary', is an expression based on the assumed differentiation. *Śivārkamaṇidīpikā* too does not accept time:

*bauddhānām mate vastutaḥ kāla nāstiudyann eva svarasabhṅguro ghaṭādih kṣaṇaparikalpanāmātra-nimittam bhavati sa ca ghaṭādih svodayavināśa-parikalpitakṣaṇava ttvāt kṣaniko 'pi bhavati, vapuḥ samñicchilāputraka itivat vastutaḥ svavyatirikta-kṣaṇāt svayam eva kṣaṇo 'pi bhavaññiṭṭeṣām prakriyā*<sup>127</sup>

"In the opinion of the Buddhists *Kāla* does not exist. A jar etc. which is perishable by nature in the very act of emerging becomes the basis for the assumption of *kṣaṇa*.

"The Buddhists believe in the *kṣaṇabhāṅgavāda*; that is, an object exists only for a moment after which it perishes and then in the next moment it becomes another object. That is why in Buddhist texts the brevity of life is emphasised most. 'Brief is the life of human beings,' says *Samyuttanikāya*... 'none to whom death cometh not.<sup>128</sup> Even of *Brahmā*, whose day is of a thousand years, it is said that 'his life is little<sup>129</sup>, not for long.<sup>130</sup>' This is how the Buddhist mind speculates on time.

### Cārvāka or Lokāyata

Now, taking up the Cārvāka or Lokāyata system we may say that it accepts only four 'Bhūtas', viz., earth, water, air, and fire.<sup>131</sup> The Cārvākas do not include *Kāla* which will have to be established by such usage as 'here is a jar' (*idānīm ghaṭaḥ*) which is based on direct perception, for, without the assumption of *Kāla* such usage is not possible.



## Conception of Time in the Mahābhāṣya

Patañjali, the author of the *Mahābhāṣya*, has attributed eternity not only to the Vedas but also to sky, heaven, space and time. According to the Naiyāyikas, the earth, light, water and air are eternal in so far as their ultimate atoms are concerned while the sky, time, mind, the quarters and the soul are eternal in their entirety. Under the Pāṇini rule IV. 2.3 Patañjali expressly states that both time and stars are permanent.<sup>1</sup> He argues that even that thing where the essence is not destroyed is also permanent (*tad api nityam yasmiṁś tattvaṁ na vihanyate*)<sup>2</sup>.

Patañjali considers time to be the ultimate substratum of the universe (*kālo hi jagadādhāraḥ*). He regards it as indivisible, permanent, one and all pervading. He defines time as that whereby the growth and decay of material objects are perceived.<sup>3</sup> It is this which causes the quantitative changes in all objects. Kaiyaṭa makes it clear when he says : Now we see development, now decay in things such as grass, creepers, trees; other causes remaining the same. What this change (*pariṇāma*) is due to is time.<sup>4</sup>

The division of time into day, night, months, years and cycles, etc., is only an artificial process of calculation; it is by virtue of its conjunction with some action as the movement of the sun (*kayā kriyayā, ādityagatyā*)<sup>5</sup> that we say it is day, it is night. In other words it is the movement of the sun which is the basis of our conception of the so called division of time. Time otherwise is one, eternal and all-pervading.<sup>6</sup>

Bhāṣyakāra recognizes the threefold division of time into present, past and future but sticking to his earlier enunciated view considers it empirical. According to Kaiyaṭa the past, the present and the future are merely particular modes of existence.<sup>7</sup> Hence the future changes into the present and the present changes into the past. By existence Kaiyaṭa means not only real existence but also ideal. It is the tree conceived by the



mind and existing in it that is affirmed, denied or produced. Things absolutely non-existent such as the hare's horn are conceived by the mind and are referred to by their names. This ideal or conceptual existence appears externally as material existence. If words such as 'a tree' were to express only external existence then it would do to say 'a tree' and it would be redundant to say 'a tree is'. Again it would be a contradiction to say 'a tree is not', and it would not be reasonable to say as we do 'a sprout has sprung up', for what is cannot be said to be 'becoming'. But once we accept the interpretation of Kaiyaṭa the use of *asti* and *nāsti* has a purpose : it is there to denote the existence, etc. of the thing outside the mind.

But here Kaiyaṭa raises an interesting question : Can we qualify existence (*sattā*) as future existence or past existence? *Sattā* which is derived from the present participle of *as* 'to be' necessarily implies the present. The existent is necessarily the present in the absolute sense ; hence it would be inconsistent to talk of future or past existence. But if it be urged here that the futurity or the pastness of the substrata in which existence resides could justify the use of such expressions as future existence; then we say even then existence (*sattā*) would not be present.

The Bhāṣyakāra gives a very beautiful answer to all this. He explains the use of the future, past and present with regard to one and the same existent thing on the basis of its conjunction with the senses or absence of it. There are two different actions, one of the senses, the other of the mind. The action of the senses is approach, conjunction or contact. The action of the mind is conceiving. A person anxious to go to Pāṭaliputra says: "On the way to Pāṭaliputra which I am to traverse, there will be a well." When he has reached the well he says : "The well is." When he leaves it behind and proceeds further he says : "The well was." In all this, when we have action of the senses we have the past and the future tenses (with their varieties) when, however, we have the action of the mind, we have the present tense.\*

Now an objection is raised here with regard to the present in respect of things that have been ever-existing, for there is no division of time in their case.<sup>9</sup> For instance we should not say :



"The mountains stand." But against this, it may be urged that the present which is *nowness* is an antithesis of the past and the future. Since things which have been ever-existing have neither the past nor the future time, the present is thereby its very nature and in its own right, and needs no support from any quarter. To this the critic's reply is : These appellations, the past, the future, the present, apply only to things that have an origin. These appellations are explainable only on the basis of origination having a definite limit. Thus things or events are called future, when the means are present and production is expected; they are present, when after origination they persist; and they are past, when after origination they have perished. The appellation present, therefore, stands between the past and the future. Where there are no past and future, there is no present either; for the present is antithetical to the past and the future. Since things which are constant have no past and future, there is no present, so far as they are concerned. Not only that. Since there is no time division in their case, there is no action conditioning time. Action is a process which determines time.

To this Bhāṣyakāra's reply is : Yes, there are time divisions even in their case.<sup>10</sup> The actions of the kings (the motion of the Sun, etc.) past, future and present, are the substrata of the standing of the mountains. This explains such expressions as, the mountains will stand, the mountains stood.

Again the objector points out that there is little justification for the use of the present tense when an action goes on because of the non-achievement of the principal purpose, but comes to an end and becomes a thing of the past, as the agent begins some other action or actions. It should not be reasonable to say 'we are living here', 'we are performing here a sacrifice for Puṣyamitra'. The priest, even when he is busy otherwise and is not performing the sacrifice, speaks thus, as he is still intent on performing the sacrifice, for he has not achieved the purpose, viz., the sacrificial fee. The Bhāṣyakāra replies that action is understood to be present, so long as the principal object is not achieved; it does not cease because some other actions which have their own distinct purpose, intervene. Hence the use of the present tense is perfectly justified. But if it be insisted on



that there is interruption by the intervening actions, hence, the action is no longer present, but is past, the Bhāṣyakāra says that even if intervention is interruption, the action is present, not past. When we speak of Devadatta as : 'Devadatta eats', we know that while he is eating, he now smiles, now talks and now drinks water. Yet no denying the fact that the action of eating belongs to the present. If interruption does not affect the continuity of action in this case, why should it do in other cases?

There is yet another way of showing how other actions coming in between, do not interfere with the countinuity of the (principal) action such as eating which, therefore, goes on in the present. The various intervening actions, such as smiling are no more than parts of the same action, such as eating, since they are secondary and helpful like sipping, etc. And parts do not intercept the whole. Surely Devadatta is not intercepted by his own limbs.<sup>11</sup>

Now the objector turns a thorough sceptic and challenges the very existence of the present. He asserts that there is no such thing as the present time. He argues : Action that is finished is past, and that not yet finished (or undertaken) is future, but we cannot conceive of anything that is neither finished nor unfinished, there being no intermediate stage. Besides the past and the future, therefore, there is nothing else in between.<sup>12</sup> In other words, action is the state of being effected. In the course of this process, the moment that is past, existed and action for that moment was accordingly past; the moment that does not exist, is yet to come and be effected, the action qualified by that moment is future. And there is no such moment as may be both existent and non-existent, for that would be self-contradictory.

Again all action being imperceptible and only inferrable from its outcome is necessarily past and could be denoted only by the past tense. Rightly as intelligent young thinker addresses a crow the question : 'How are we to define your flight? Surely *patasi* (flies) cannot be said of your flight in the past, for that is over, nor can it be spoken of your flight in the future, for that too does not exist. The use of *patasi* would be justified only if the flight lay in the present. Were it so, we shall have to say that



whole world moves likewise and that the Himālayas too move.<sup>13</sup> That would be indeed absurd.

Then there is a view of the ancients (which should also be honoured) that there is no movement in the world, hence no time including the present. The ancients declare :

The wheel does not move, the arrow is not thrown, the rivers do not flow to the sea, the whole world is motionless and there is no active agent; he who views the state of things thus is also not blind.<sup>14</sup>

The idea is repeated in a slightly different way : In all the three divisions of time, there is no motion; how then do we say: "He goes."<sup>15</sup> If it be urged, says the objector, that action is present because it is there as it (action) is a state of being effected, a process, he would say that this too was untenable; for a single thing by itself incapable of differentiation is not possessed of succession, which is action. A thing is or is not. What is, is not to be effected and, therefore, does not possess succession. What is not, could not in that condition of non-being, be capable of being effected and, therefore, possessed of succession. Surely a non-existent thing, devoid as it is of all properties, could not have any succession. There being no third category of things, there is no one thing that may be characterized as a state of being effected and, therefore, possessed of succession. How could it be then present?<sup>16</sup>

Again, if it be assumed that moments possessed of sequence, some prior, others posterior, constitute action and that this action continuing till fruition must be admitted to be in the present, even this assumption would be wrong, points out the objector. For, the parts arising in succession are mutually unrelated; they, therefore, are not at all simultaneous. It is only one single moment that is perceived to be present, and that being by itself undifferentiated has no succession. Nor can it be urged that many such successive moments are remembered simultaneously, for that is not possible; because we remember as we perceive and not contrariwise; and the one moment has not been perceived to possess succession, how could then remembrance give one a notion of succession?<sup>17</sup>

Remembrance apart, the various moments could not



constitute one single action ; for then everything would be both existent and non-existent but that is not possible. Existence and non-existence are contradictory and exclusive to each other. To obviate this difficulty, we shall have to assume a common attribute of the different moments and this is that we assume that each one of the moments is able to effect action. But this would mean that there are a number of actions, not one. For what is assumed is that many moments have the common attribute, *kriyādharmā*, and not that all of them make one action. Hence the question, how action is present remains still unanswered.<sup>18</sup>

To all this Bhartṛhari gives the answer in Kārikā III. 9.89. Action consisting of a series of moments is assumed to be one. Moments having a definite succession and arising in pursuit of one definite object are termed action, which is one so long as the object is one. Although the moments are not simultaneous, when one is existent, another is not-existent, still they are present. For by 'present' we do not mean existent, but 'begun and not (yet) finished.' And that is true of that series of moments which continue to arise (and disappear) till fruition and which are unified conceptually. This series of moments alone is capable of producing action. And this is inferable from its outcome. When an aggregate of moments possessed of its characteristic succession is comprehended as existent, then this existence of it, is its presentness. The upshot of all this is : An aggregate of moments possesses succession. Though it is both existent and non-existent ; each one of the moments conceived as mutually related by sequence and, therefore, existent is present. True, every movement by itself is not possessed of succession and is, therefore, not action, yet the sequence given rise to by other moments following it, is surely an object of our consciousness; hence there is nothing wrong with it.

The Bhāṣyakāra sums up the case for the present in the following words : The present does not exist. It is not perceived like the motion of the sun. Yet it is there. The five lotus-fibres in the inside of a lotus-stalk, when being burnt are not noticed as being burnt. Similarly subtle things are knowable only by inference. We use *gacchati* (he goes), for there is action which



is present. How? First, there is mental action, the desire to achieve something. This mental action leads to physical action. Both these actions, mental and physical, prior and posterior, ending with the production of the fruit are unified by the mind (which has the power of piecing things together) and presented as one action. The use of the present tense in *gacchati* is, therefore, perfectly justified.<sup>19</sup>

## References

1. *nitye hi kālanakṣatre, Mahābhāṣya*, on Pāṇini IV. 2.3
2. *Mahābhāṣya* under *vār* : *siddhe śabdārthasambandhe*.
3. *yena mūrtinām upacayāś cāpacayaś ca lakṣyante taṁ kālam āhuḥ. tasyaiva kayācit kriyayā yuktasyāhar itī bhavati rātrir iti ca*, on Pāṇ. II. 2.5. In this Bhartṛhari closely follows Mahābhāṣyakāra, vide his *Kārika*, *mūrtinām tena bhinnānām ācayāpacayaḥ prthak lakṣyante pariṇāmena sarvāsām bhedayoninā. Kālasamuddeśa, Kārikā 13*.
4. *tarutṛṇalatāprabhṛtīnām kadācid upacayo 'nyadā tv apacayaḥ sa pratyayāntaraviśeṣe'pi yatkrtaḥ sa kālaḥ. Pradīpa* on *Mahābhāṣya* on Pāṇini II. 2.5
5. *Mahābhāṣya* on Pāṇini II. 2.5. Bhartṛhari too accepts this view vide his *kārikās* : *tasyātmā bahudhā bhinno bhedair dharmāntarāśrayaiḥ. nahi bhīnnam abhinnaṁ vā vastu kiñcana vidyate. naiko na cāpy aneko 'sti na śuklo nāpi cāsitaḥ. dravyātmā sa tu samsargād evamrūpaḥ prakāśate. samsargiṇām tu ye bhedā viśeṣās tasya te matāḥ. sambhinnas tair vyavasthānām kālo bhedāya kalpate. Kālasamuddeśa, Kārikās 6-8*.
6. It is interesting to observe here that Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa, the grammarian-philosopher does not accept this view of Bhāṣyakāra. To him time is neither one, nor eternal and allpervading. If time is one, argues he, it would not be possible to account for the diversity of effects produced; hence time must be held to be a stream of moments. Nor can time be maintained to be eternal, allpervasive, etc., for time is said to be the cause of various actions in so far as it forms their substratum, but unless it is qualified, it cannot be the substratum of such notion as 'now there is jar' and if a qualification of it is to be assumed, then we shall have to assume another determination for that qualification : and still another for the second; and so on *ad infinitum*. *Laghumañjūṣā* p. 848 Chowkhambā Ed..
7. *avasthāviśeṣasyaivātūlādīsamjñā, Pradīpa* on *Mahābhāṣya*.
8. *Mahābhāṣya* on Pāṇini III. 3. 133.



9. *nityappravṛtte ca kālāvibhāgat, Vārttika on Pāṇ. III. 2. I 33.*
10. *Mahābhāṣya on Pāṇini. III. 3. I.33.*
11. *III. 9.84.*
12. *III. 9.85.*
13. *mīmāṃsako manyamāno yuvā medhāvisammataḥ  
kākam snehenānupṛcchati kim te patitalakṣṇam  
anāgato na patasi atīkrānte ca kāka na  
yadi samprati patasi sarvo lokāḥ pataty ayam  
Himavān api calati .....*  
*Mahābhāṣya on 3.2.123.*
14. *na vartate catram iṣur na pātyate na syandante saritaḥ sāgarāya  
kūtaśtho 'yam loko na viceṣṭitāsti yo hy evam paśyati so 'py  
anandhaḥ*
15. *anāgatam atīkrāntaṁ vartamānam iti trayam  
sarvatra ca gatir nāsti gachchatiit kim ucyate*
16. *III. 9.86.*
17. *III. 9.87.*
18. *III. 9.89.*
19. *asti vartamānaḥ kālaḥ. ādityagativan no palabhyate.  
visasya vālā iva dahyamānā na lakṣyate vikṛtiḥ sannīpāte  
asīlī tām vedayante tribhāvāḥ sūkṣmo hi bhāvo 'numitena gamyaḥ  
kriyāpravṛttau yo hetus tadarthaṁ yad viceṣṭitam  
tatsamīkṣya prayujjīta gacchatiy avicārayan.*  
*-Mahābhāṣya on 3.2.123.*



## Conception of Space (Dik) in the Vākyapadīya

Bhartrhari holds space to be a Power or a Force (Śakti) along with time.<sup>1</sup> By Śakti he means something dependent, i.e. something which abides in its substratum and has no existence independently of it. Space cannot be a substance, as held by the Vaiśeṣika, for it is a Śakti which is to be inferred from its effect of helping things hold together. Such a Śakti cannot be expressed by a single word or phrase and has to be defined. To required definition of space, Bhartrhari gives us Kārikās 2 and 3 of the Dik Samuddeśa.<sup>2</sup> Dik is a Śakti which is the cause of differentiation (*vyatireka*) between a limit and an object sought to be limited by it, which again is the cause of the notion of straightness without reference to any other thing and which presents the lower species of motions such as rotatory, horizontal, etc. This Śakti, though one, is diversified by its limiting adjuncts. As explained by Helārāja, the relation between two things, one being prior and another posterior to it, is an adventitious quality produced in them, which certainly is no part of their nature; for that is incapable of producing it; it must, therefore, have another cause, and that cause is Dik (space). If it be urged that this (new) relation may be the effect of a universal, etc., we say no, for we are not conscious of our notion of it being coloured by a universal, etc. By the process of elimination, therefore, it is Dik that is the cause of it and nothing else. Hence the Vaiśeṣikas say: "The characteristic of Dik is that it is from or on account of it that there arises the fact that this thing is here or there from this other thing."<sup>3</sup> Since Dik is knowable only by inference and is understood as a qualification of things, it cannot be an independent substance. Dik is not perceptible like substances such as earth. Though Dik is one, yet by virtue of its limiting adjuncts, it appears as many and is



spoken of as ten. It is the conjunction of the sun with a particular part of the horizon that is the cause of our notion of the east, the west, etc.

Now if an accessory cause such as conjunction with the sun is to be accepted to explain our notion of the east or west, etc., why not dispense with Dik altogether, asks the objector? The reply is that the conjunction is not by itself either prior or posterior, which relation is admittedly a product of Dik. Nor can it be advanced that time can be that effective cause in place of Dik; for it is also equally the cause of the notion of the relation of mutual priority and posteriority. Because, these notions produced by time and space belong to two different spheres, this necessitates the assumption of these two distinct entities. The relation of priority and posteriority between finite bodies (corporeal things) is caused by space and that between the parts of an action, or between two actions having two different substrata, in the form of succession, is caused by time. This is set forth in Kārikā (III. 6.4).<sup>4</sup> As explained by Helārāja, our notions of prior and posterior in respect of finite things arise from their conjunction with a place which is prior or posterior, but a place owes this priority or posteriority to space (Dik).

Not only that. Dik (space) is also the cause of the hypothetical relation of priority and posteriority between infinite things on the one hand, and finite things on the other. Hence there is no escape from it. Now Ākāśa is one, but this one Ākāśa comes to be differentiated by objects in association with it. Thus conditioned, it has various conjunctions and disjunctions with the parts of finite substances. It is space itself qualified as prior or posterior, east or west that functions to relate the assumed parts of the Ākāśa. Thus a group of stars conjoined with prior Ākāśa is termed prior, and another conjoined with posterior Ākāśa is termed posterior. All this is beautifully expressed in Kārikā III. 6.5.<sup>5</sup>

Now an objector makes an attempt. He urges that the assumption that space possesses *pūrvatva* and *paratva* as parts of its nature involves the fault technically called *anavasthā*



and asks if space can have such parts as intrinsic or integral to it. He also asks—what is wrong with the places that they are incapable of having such parts? This is answered in Kārikā III. 6.6.<sup>6</sup> That a place is a container or a receptacle is its own nature, it is not dependent upon the power of something else; but priority or posteriority is no part of its nature. When a place comes to have this adventitious quality, it must be due to a cause outside it and that cause is space. But in the case of space, priority or posteriority is not dependent upon anything else, it is a part of its nature. And space, being infinite, cannot assume the character of a receptacle in addition to its quality *pūrvāparatva*, for which it would require a cause. But space must be a principle such as is inferable from its effect, priority or posteriority, viz. it must be of the nature of priority and posteriority. This is cryptically put down in the first half of the Kārikā *Diśo vyavasthā deśānām digvyavasthā na vidyate*. Every thing has its own unique nature; hence space cannot be both a receptacle and have the nature of priority and posteriority. Things come to have varied or complex nature only under the influence of other things in relation with them. And, if a substance were assumed to possess a variety of Śaktis, it would work independently of accessory causes and might produce all sorts of effects.

Bhartrhari once again emphasizes that Dik is a Power (Śakti) and that priority and posteriority form its very nature. It is the condition of the priority and posteriority in places; but priority and posteriority are its own inherent qualities which are not due to any other external object. The Dik which gives the notion of priority is prior. If it were otherwise, Dik would be an empty name, not signifying any real thing.<sup>7</sup>

To Bhartrhari, as to the Vaiśeṣika, Dik is *vibhu*, all pervading; for it operates everywhere: the quality of priority or posteriority is produced by it in all things without exception. This is what is meant by *vibhutva*, all-pervasiveness, declares Bhartrhari.<sup>8</sup>

**How do we know that space exists?**

The definition of space (Dik) given above implies that we



derive our knowledge of it from inference. Now what is the basis of this inference? In other words, what constitutes the logical ground (liṅga) for this inference? A summit of a mountain is aglow with sunshine, while another is covered by thick shade. This division of the mountain into parts, characterized by sunshine and shade, would not be possible, if there were no space. For in the absence of space, there would be no prior or posterior limit which alone is the cause of the notion of the plurality of parts. The division into parts (to have been due to relation with Dik) is surely the evidence of the existence of Dik.<sup>9</sup>

It might perhaps be urged that so far as corporeal bodies are concerned there is little necessity of postulating an independent entity like Dik to account for the notion of the diversity of parts, because that diversity can become the object of our consciousness by virtue of the conjunction of those bodies, say, with shade, sunshine, etc. To this we reply 'No'. It is wrongly assumed here that corporeal bodies are directly in conjunction with shade or sunshine. The fact is that it is their component parts that are directly conjoined with sunshine or shade. For instance, the rays of the sun that fall on one side of a jar are in contact only with the postherds of that particular side; and on the other side, the postherds alone are in conjunction with the shade. This means that the jar is neither in conjunction with the shade nor with the sunshine. If, however, it be said that the whole, the substance, having the same locus with, and thus present in the parts is in contact with the shade, etc., we point out that in that event the whole, being in contact with the shade, etc., will cease to have the same locus with its parts—a contingency highly undesirable. Moreover, it is an indirect admission that it is parts only that are directly in conjunction with the shade, etc. Hence Dik has to be assumed to account for the notions of priority, posteriority, lowness, highness, etc., in all corporeal things.

There is also another logical necessity for the assumption of Dik. All produced things are ultimately the product of atoms. The atoms are believed to be without parts. Production of various things means combination of atoms. But how do they combine



and how does the minimal gross magnitude (visible to the naked eye) arise from the combination of atoms which are the limits of minuteness? As a rule a magnitude is capable of giving rise only to a superior magnitude of the same order. Thus the gross magnitude of two bodies is invariably found to be the cause of a grosser magnitude in the body which they produce by their combination. Hence the magnitude of a dyad (dvyanuka) should be minuter than that of either of the constituent atoms. The Vaiśeṣika, however, denies causal efficiency to atomic magnitude and hence rules out a minuter magnitude resulting in the effect. Bhartṛhari has his own answer. He affirms that atoms, though themselves without parts, come to have four sides and the lower and upper surfaces by virtue of association with Dik (space). Thus when six atoms combine, they have each a side for conjunction. This explains the resultant gross magnitude. Yet, however, unless Dik is assumed, it would not be possible to account for the development of a gross magnitude from the atomic magnitude of the constituents. Dik has, therefore, to be assumed as the very first cause of the ascription of parts to the primary material cause of production, viz. the atoms.<sup>10</sup>

The necessity of the assumption of *dik* has been challenged on yet another ground. It is urged that things emerge (come into existence) possessed of a particular structural arrangement of parts, how then does Dik help to give them a form? To this Bhartṛhari gives a replay in Kārikā III. 6.14.<sup>11</sup> Says he: Things are in their nature devoid of locus (deśa); parts (bhāga), succession (krama) and the colouring by conditions (upāśraya); it is only on account of their association with other things that they vary. Infinite things such as ākāśa have no locus (or locality), for they are all-pervading. Similarly with finite things, for how could such an external thing as a place or room form part of their nature? Both these categories of things are only assumed to be in conjunction with places or to inhere in them. Things are in their nature devoid of parts which are distinct from them, and which are assumed to be related to them. And if things have no real parts, they are free from succession, for that is grounded on difference. Again, in their own nature, they



are not subject to the colouring by limiting adjuncts. But it is association with other things that seems to change their nature, which really remains unaffected. Thus of a number of things lying in the same direction, say, the west, on particular thing may be positionally lower. Now this notion is entirely due to *dik*. Again, the parts of a whole stand undistinguished on account of the quality of inherence. But we have a notion of its parts. This notion, too, is produced by *dik*.

If, indeed, things are really without parts, how is it that an object like a jar presents itself to us as a whole apparently made up a parts and possessing sensible magnitude? To this Bhartṛhari's reply is that, as a matter of fact, the whole being quite distinct from its component parts a jar as well as an atom is devoid of parts. It is under the influence of the power called *dik* that the component parts develop positional relation of priority and posteriority and become non-distinguishable from the whole by virtue of the quality of inherence. If a whole were in its very nature possessed of parts, it would not be one, but many. And we are here not concerned with secondary divisibility, for that could well be predicated even of an atom. As for magnitude itself, which is minute in the case of an atom and gross (sensible) in the case of a jar, it is also different from the thing produced. Dimension is a specific Force which is the cause of our notions of the gross and atomic magnitudes. Hence what differentiates a jar from an atom is the difference in dimension.<sup>12</sup>

Again, if wholes are really different from their component parts, and if a qualification supplied by a limiting adjunct is no inherent part of their nature, all things would become undefinable and indistinguishable. They would, like Brahman, be internally non-differentiable (*svagatabhedasūnya*). To this Bhartṛhari says: we agree. This is the real nature of things. All this difference is apparent, it is empirical, a product of avidyā. It has become, as it were, a part of the nature of things and cannot be denied. Yet it cannot be maintained that it is real. As already observed, the wholes are different from their parts. But the parts must be different from their parts, and these other again from their parts, so on and so forth, till we come to the



atom. To the atom too, space imparts parts or sides, for how else is the undifferentiated atom to produce diversity? Space, too, is differentiated by conjunction with the sun. The conjunctions of the sun are also differentiated by conjunction with the sun. The conjunctions of the sun are also differentiated by the different parts of the Meru mountain; and these parts by their own, and these again by their parts, till we come back to space. This difference is like a movement in a circle and stops nowhere. There is *anavasthā*. All this difference, therefore, lacks proof and must be held to be apparent only. Not only are things not differentiated in themselves, but they are not differentiated even by the limiting adjuncts, for they must themselves be differentiated by other limiting adjuncts, and those others by still others, and so on and so forth, the differentiation stopping nowhere. The limiting adjuncts, too, therefore, are quite incapable of differentiating the nature of things.<sup>13</sup>

Now Bhartṛhari declares emphatically that he would be a bold man indeed who would deny the empirical existence of both time and space. All our experience is determined by priority or posteriority. The notion of priority and posteriority has become so inextricably woven with our consciousness of things that it has become vital to our very being. We are as much convinced that time and space exist as our own consciousness (Intelligence) which is no other than the self; and the self is recognized by all controversialists. Since both time and space are objects of experience, there is little sense in discarding them.<sup>14</sup>

And if time and space are discarded, what will be there to regulate our conduct, secular and religious? Shastric injunctions, with a seen or unseen purpose, such as 'one should face the east when dining, one should perform the śrāddha ceremony in the afternoon, could not be faithfully carried out in the absence of both time and space. For, in their absence, there would be nothing to cause the notion of prior and posteriority in things and action. Although this world is devoid of succession, there being nothing priority or posterior positionally or chronologically, yet the enlightened person to whom the falsity of this world of phenomena has become



manifest, accepts this world and while he rejects time and space on the basis of reason, does accept them both in practice; for there is no escape from the notion of priority and posteriority generated by them.<sup>15</sup>

### **The Advaitin's View**

As is usual with Bhartṛhari, he concludes his treatise on space with the statement of the Advaitin's view of it. According to this view, Dik (space) does not exist externally. It is the externalization of the Inner Consciousness under the influence of Avidyā without a beginning, an outward manifestation of that one Principle in various forms which have no real existence.<sup>16</sup> Bhartṛhari repeats the idea when he says: The heaven, the earth, the wind, the sun, the oceans, the rivers and the quarters are all parts of the internal organ, which had manifested them in so many external forms.<sup>17</sup> This Appearance is, therefore, independent of any real external existence. Priority and posteriority too are the product of Nescience. Things are said to be internal and external; but as a matter of fact, there is no such difference. The so-called difference does not go beyond words, it does not touch the nature of things.

Proceeding further, Bhartṛhari discusses the question whether space is one or many. He says that neither assumption brings us any the nearer to the truth. The assumption that space is fundamentally one, being only diversified by the various limiting conditions, is as false as the one that space is primarily many as inferred from its effects. Anyway human activity goes on unhampered. Things are not in their essence as they are represented to us by various thinkers; surely they could not have the conflicting characteristics attributed to them by the different schools of thought. Their true nature transcends the various views held of them.<sup>18</sup>

Now Bhartṛhari argues why oneness or manyness cannot be true of space, and, for the matter of that, of any thing. There is the dictum that of two interdependent things, if the one cannot be proved, the other too becomes automatically unproved; hence the oneness or manyness of space is incapable of proof. We in this world go by our experience, take things as they



appear to us. In the ultimate analysis, even such contraries as difference and non-difference do not exist. The one without a second is the only truth. Moreover, space has been defined here as a power, which is the condition of other things. And a power cannot be said to be one or many.<sup>19</sup> Manyness is doubtless predicable of things possessed of power; but a power cannot be differentiated, dependent as it is on a substratum, even when they, the substrata, are many. Nor the oneness such as experienced in a jar is part of the nature of a power.<sup>20</sup>

And there is further reason why oneness or manyness in respect of a power like space is unprovable. The concept of oneness must necessarily involve the concept of its opposite, viz. manyness. It cannot stand alone. It is unthinkable without its counterpart. Similarly manyness, dependent upon its opposite oneness, is unthinkable; independently of the latter. Hence neither oneness nor manyness can be exclusively predicated of space. It is, therefore, neither one nor many.

## References

1. *dik sādhanam kriyā kāla iti vastvabhīdhāyinaḥ |  
sāktirūpe padārthānām atyanta manavasthitāḥ ||* III. 6.1.
2. *vyatirekasya yo hetur avadhipratipādyayoh |  
rjvityeva yato 'nyena vinā buddhiḥ pravartate ||  
karmaṇo jātibhedānām abhiviyaktir yadāśrayā |  
sā svair upādhibhir bhinnā śaktir dig iti kathyate ||* III. 6.2-3.
3. *ita idam iti yatas taddiśo liṅgaṁ | Vai. su. II. 2.10.*
4. *parāparatve mūrtānām deśabhedanibandhanai |  
tata eva prakalpyete kramarūpe tu kālataḥ ||*

It may be noted that the Text of the *Vākyapadiya* and of the *Helārāja* (the Commentary thereon) is generally corrupt but at places so horribly spoilt by the unintelligent scribe that it is a challenge to the most learned among scholars. Even the most ingenious fail to hit upon the correct reading. The confusion is indeed baffling. In the above *Kārikā*, we have changed the original reading *kramarūpe na kalpataḥ* to *kramarūpe tu kālataḥ*, for that alone makes sense, and has, besides, the support of *Helārāja* who remarks: *pūrvam abhūd bhaviṣyati param iti tu kriyāpaurvāparyam kālaśaktikṛtapratibandhābhyanujñāvaśād vyavatiṣṭhata*



5. *ākāśasya pradeśena bhāgaḥ cānyaiḥ prthak prthakī  
sā saṁyogavibhāgānām upādhitvāya kalpate*||
6. *diśo vyavasthā deśānām digvyavasthā na vidyate |  
śaktayaḥ khalu bhāvānām upakāraprabhāvītāḥ*||
7. *pratyastarūpā bhāveṣu dik pūrvetyabhidhīyate |  
pūrvabuddhir yato dik sā samākhyāmātram anyathā*|| III. 6.7.
8. *sarvatra tasya kāryasya darśanād vibhur iṣyate |  
vibhūtvam etad evaḥur anyāḥ kāryavatām vidhiḥ*|| III. 6.17.
9. *chāyābhābhāyām nagādīnām bhāgabhedāḥ prakalpate |  
ataddharmasvabhāveṣu bhāgabhedo na kalpate*|| III.6.12.
10. *paramāṇor abhāgasya diśā bhāgo vidhiyate |  
bhāgaprakalpanāśaktiṁ prathamām tām pracakṣate*|| III. 6.13.
11. *adeśāś cāpyabhāgāś ca niṣkramā nirupāśrayaḥ |  
bhāvāḥ saṁsargirūpāt tu śaktibhedāḥ prakalpate*||
12. *nirbhāgātmakā tulyā paramāṇor ghaṭasya ca |  
bhāgāḥ śaktiyantarām tatra parimāṇam ca yat tayoḥ*|| III. 6.15.
13. *yataḥ prakalpyate bhedo' bhedas tatrāpi dṛśyate |  
adṛṣṭoparatim bhedam ato' yuktatarām viduḥ*|| III. 6.16.
14. *caitanyavat sthitā loke dikkālaparikalpanā |  
prakṛtiṁ prāṇinām tām hi ko 'nyathā sthāpayiṣyati*|| III. 6.18.
15. *saṁkaro vyavahārānām prakṛteh syād viparyaye |  
tasmāt tyajanna imān bhāvān punar evāvalambate*|| III. 6.19.
16. *antaḥkaraṇadharma vā bahir evam prakāśate |  
asyām tv antarbahirbhāvaḥ prakriyāyām na vidyate*|| III. 6.23.
17. *dyauḥ kṣamā vāyur ādityaḥ sāgarāḥ sarito diśaḥ |  
antaḥkaraṇatattvasya bhāgā bahir avasthitāḥ*|| III. 7.41.
18. *ekatv amāśām śaktīnām nānātvam veti kalpane |  
avastupatite jñātvā satyato na parāmṛṣet*|| III. 6.24.
19. *naikatvam asti nānātvam vinaikatvena netaraḥ |  
paramārthe tayoṛ eṣa bhedo 'tyantām na vidyate*|| III. 6.26.
20. *na śaktīnām tathā bhedo yathā śaktimatām sthitiḥ |  
na ca laukikam ekatvam tāsām ātmasu vidyate*|| III. 6.27.



## The Vedic Interpretation and the Role of the Bṛhaddevatā therein

The Vedic interpretation has engaged the attention of a number of scholars in ancient India. In the *Nirukta*, the oldest extant treatise on the etymology of Vedic words there are references to several old schools and individuals who differed from each other about Vedic interpretation. The schools are *aitihāsikas* *yājñikas* *nairuktas* etc. The individuals are Sākatāyana, Gālava, Udumbara, Tittiri, Gārgya, Śākapuṇi, Sthaulāṣṭhvi and others. These facts combined with another that Yāska himself offers alternative interpretation would convince even a cursory reader that there never was unanimity among the various schools and scholars about the interpretation of the Veda.

In the sacrificial creed evolved by the Brāhmaṇas, out of the heroic exploits of Aryan deities, the formal rituals became the accepted meaning of the Veda. In the sacrificial altar constructed for the purpose, the sacrificing priests would offer prayers and oblations to the deities, on behalf of their patrons, by chanting *mantras* in prescribed ways. But, in course of time, the deities and their deeds faded in memory and instead, the sages and sacrifice grew in importance. We know, on the authority of Yāska<sup>1</sup> that by the time he wrote the *Nirukta* the original sense of the *mantras* had become dim and that scholars had begun to doubt that even the Vedic mantras and sense at all.<sup>2</sup>

### The Naturalistic School

Yāska was the foremost among the etymologists who extracted the Veda from the meshes of rituals. He had discovered some irregularities in the ritualistic procedures of the Brāhmaṇas. In certain sacrifices, for instance, a number of *mantras* were employed when there was no indication in the *mantras* themselves about their employment. Certain *mantras* were chanted at a rite where they had no relevance. Yāska who



observed all such defects made an attempt at secularizing the Veda.

We know from Yāska that there were several schools of etymologists who carried out their special function of Vedic interpretation. They proceeded on precise and scientific lines. They observed that every Vedic word was the product of a root and should be explained in relation to the meaning of that root.<sup>3</sup> They also held that if a word was not derivable from one root it should be derived from more than one root.<sup>4</sup> Such derivations were allowed if they were accompanied by the connotations of a word.<sup>5</sup> It was also ordained that whatever inner meaning or symbolic significance was there it should emerge from the text itself and should not be imported into it from outside.

#### **A Critical Review of the Naturalistic School**

The approach of the etymologists was very rigid, for it closed doors on other sources such as traditional and mythology. Words of historical significance were explained on naturalistic lines. Vṛtra, the son of Tvaṣṭṛ became a cloud; Indra, the enemy of Vṛtra became lightning. Indra, the lightning struck the clouds and released the waters. Thus, the actual event, recorded in tradition, was converted into a natural phenomenon and explained on naturalistic lines, in complete disregard of traditional authority, in spite of the fact that neither the *mantras* nor the Brāhmaṇas supported the naturalistic explanation.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, the word 'aditya' which simply meant 'the son of Aditi' (*Aditeḥ putraḥ*) and conveyed a historical significance was derived<sup>7</sup> from  $\bar{a} + \sqrt{dā}$  'to take' and identified with the sun because he takes liquids from the earth in the shape of vapour or appropriates light of other luminaries, stars, planets and constellations, for they become invisible in sunlight. These derivations were forced by the naturalistic tendency of the etymologists. The real explanation of *āditya* as *Aditeḥ putraḥ* was relegated to the last place because it referred to a history which the naturalists must reject because it would not suit their interpretation.

The etymologists' method of interpretation of words was highly defective. Words had descended from antiquity. They had suffered corruption or undergone change in meaning. Some



were imported from other languages and could not be traced to any origin. The attempt to derive every word from a root was, therefore, quite unnatural.

### The Secular or Historical School

The next stage in the matter of Vedic interpretation begins with the *Bṛhaddevatā*. Although this work was meant to ascertain the deity of a *mantra* or a hymn, we find herein a number of Vedic words explained etymologically and a number of legends narrated with reference to certain hymns. The work is neither purely etymological nor purely historical. It combines both. There are references to etymologists and grammarians – Yāska, Śakapūṇi, Śakaṭāyana, Gārgya and others – who placed emphasis on the linguistic interpretation of words. And also, by the side of it, we have a number of legends related to hymns, and embracing some phases and aspects of life of deities, sages and kings already referred to in the *Brāhmaṇas*. Thus, the work constitutes a meeting-ground for the basically opposite schools – minus the rigidity of the one and the ritualism of the other.

### Śaunaka's Criticism of the Naturalistic School

In regard to etymologists we find, that the *Bṛhaddevatā* is not always in agreement. Śaunaka is critical of Yāska when he explains *īṣate*<sup>8</sup> (RV.45.37) as *palāyate*<sup>9</sup> (N.IV.2), while in the *Naighaṇṭuka*<sup>10</sup> (II.14) the root *īṣa* is enumerated among the verbs which mean 'to go'<sup>11</sup>. Again, the *Bṛhaddevatā*<sup>12</sup> criticises Yāska when he explains *himena*<sup>13</sup> (RV. I. 116.8) as *udakena*<sup>14</sup>, for which there is no warrant. In the first instance, the term *īṣate* expressive of a general meaning (goes) is applied in a particular sense *palāyate* (flees), while in the second instance, the term *himena* expressive of a particular meaning (by frost) is applied in a general sense *udakena* (by water). Again, Yāska<sup>15</sup> while commenting on RV<sup>16</sup> explains the word *puruṣādaḥ* (man-eating) by dividing it into two (*puruṣān adanāya*) while in the Pada-text the word is not analysed but is treated as one.<sup>17</sup> Conversely, the expression *mā/sakṛt*<sup>18</sup> which is not one word in the Rgveda, Yāska has explained as one (*māsakṛt*=month-maker)<sup>19</sup>. Yāska permits himself another one when he explains the two words *garbham nidhānam*<sup>20</sup> as anomaly (N 3.6), even though



the word *sanituh* intervenes them (RV. 3.31.2).<sup>21</sup> Yāska<sup>22</sup> (N.1.7,8) is not decided whether *tva* is a particle or an inflected word or both.<sup>23</sup> Commenting on the word *śītāman* (N.4.3 ) Yāska cites the differing views of Śakaṭāyana, Taitṭiki and Gālava but does not give his own.<sup>25</sup> Commenting on RV. X.29.1 he reads *vāyo ni adhāyi*<sup>27</sup> (N.6.28) while the *Padapāṭha* reads *vā/yah/ni/adhāyi* and leaves the verb unaccented after the relative *yah*.<sup>27</sup>

Then there are words wherein a letter or two are dropped which are to be restored before the words become intelligible. Thus we have to read *attrāṇi* for *atrāṇi*, *viṣākapiḥ* for *kapiḥ*, *nābhau* for *nābha*, *dāna-manasaḥ* for *dānaḥ*, *yācāmi* for *yāmi* and *maghāsu* for *aghāsu*.<sup>29</sup>

In the interpretation of words this device is not approved by Śaunaka. For, as the *Bṛhaddevatā*<sup>30</sup> states, it is the sense, not the word, that is the starting-point in interpretation, and from the combined sense of words, the sense of the sentence is conveyed. Beside the sense of the word, there are some other factors too, viz., the subject matter, the gender, the appropriateness, considerations of place and time. All these factors contribute to the possibility of discriminating the whole sense of the Vedic *mantras*. As stated in the *Bṛhaddevatā*, for the interpretation of the Veda this was the settled rule.

### Historical School : Methodology

From the foregoing critique, it is easy to conclude, that in accepting the methodology of the naturalistic school Śaunaka had certain reservations. We find him, therefore, suggesting emendations and formulating rules to regularize the irregular of words. For instance, interpreting RV.<sup>31</sup> III.31.1 Yāska<sup>32</sup> had explained सन्दद्यत्वे as सन्दयाति by substituting √धा for धव (धवि गतौ) though for the substitution of one root for another there was no rule in the *Nirukta*. To regularize the change Śaunaka<sup>33</sup> formulated a rule that for the proper interpretation of Rks one should, if necessary, change the gender and substitute one root for another.

Thus Śaunaka formulated fresh rules. In regard to the structure of a sentence he held that words should be arranged in a regular sequence. Proper syntax alone would help understand



the sense of a sentence. However, on the method of reconstructing a sentence Śaunaka was liberal. If there be a redundant word in a sentence it should be rejected; if a word was far removed from another it should be in juxtaposition. Anyhow, the regular sequence of words was to be restored. Gender, root, etc. were to be adapted to the sense. Whatever was Vedic in a *mantra* was to be turned into every day (*laukika*) speech.<sup>34</sup> Such rules constituted an improvement on the methodology of the naturalistic school.

Śaunaka accepted the natural etymologies and discarded the unnatural ones. He declined to subscribe to the view that all nouns are derived from roots. He explained some words conventionally, others etymologically, still others by usage-cum-derivation. So far as the methodology of interpretation was concerned, there was a distinct departure from the naturalistic school.

To illustrate : While explaining *mitrah* Yāska gave a three-fold derivation but Śaunaka did not follow any. Again interpreting RV.<sup>35</sup> X.123.1 Yāska<sup>36</sup> derived Vena from *ven* 'to desire' but Śaunaka,<sup>37</sup> ignoring Yāska, derived it from *ven* 'to go'. Similarly on the explanation of certain words Yāska and Śaunaka differed widely. Yāska<sup>38</sup> explained Viśvāmitra (*sarvāmitra*) as the name of a sage, but Śaunaka<sup>39</sup> thought it designated the sun too. Further, commenting on *sarasvat* Yāska<sup>40</sup> quoted RV.<sup>41</sup> VII.96.5 where contextually it meant 'a lake full of water'. The word occurs in the *Rgveda* consecutively in three verses (vii. 96.14-10). The first three verses of hymn vii 96 are ascribed to the deity Sarasvatī, while the last three are addressed to Sarasvat. But Sarasvat is noticed by Śaunaka as signifying Indra and placed in the list of twenty-six names of Indra.

Śaunaka's exposition of rival schools was unbiased and straightforward. His attempt was not to project his views upon the convictions of his rival. Therefore, there is no sarcasm or irony in his references to the differing views of different *ācāryas*. Further, as the expounder of a historical school Śaunaka is never rigid. On one point he would accept the views of one rival school against the other. On another point he would oppose



the vary school he had sided previously. There is a tendency not to side with any particular school.

We have already noticed that in respect of etymology Śaunaka followed the methodology of Yāska which he supplemented by his own, but on certain other matters, such as the identity of deities etc. his views were quite different. If tradition supported it he would readily invest a natural object with a human complex, though this was not warranted by the text. To illustrate: the word Sarasvatī in the *R̥gveda* means the river as well as the Goddess of speech. Yāska<sup>42</sup> quotes RV.<sup>43</sup> VI.61.2. which contains expressions: shows that Sarasvatī in this verse is a river and not a Goddess. In the *Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā*<sup>44</sup> (2.5.4), on the contrary, Sarasvatī is treated as a goddess to whom offerings of animal food are to be made by the recital of this verse and the five verses that follow. Now, Śaunaka<sup>45</sup> states: Sarasvatī is praised in all stanzas in two ways: as a river and as deity. The passages in which she is praised as river are six and that there is not a seventh. The six passages<sup>46</sup> referred by him are: RV. II.41.6; VII.95.2; III.23.4; VIII.21.18; X.64.9 and VI.52.6. This excludes RV. VI.61.2. which Yāska regarded to be the seventh. But in regard to this verse Śaunaka<sup>47</sup> has quoted Aitara in support of the view, already authenticated by the *Maitrayaṇī Samihitā*, that because of the oblation the Goddess would be addressed, not the river.

### Historical School : Justification and Establishment

For the historical content Śaunaka drew upon the ritualistic tradition but for the rest he dropped it altogether. Already with the spread of the Upaniṣadic teaching, the formal ritualism enunciated by the Yājñīkas was being disregarded as inferior to the Upaniṣadic Vedānta, while at the hands of the naturalists it was being totally eliminated and virtually approaching extinction. As a result of it and later on with the rise of Buddhism in the post-Śaunaka period, it remained confined to the coteries of the priestly class, the Upādhyāyas and the Agnihottrins.

Thus Śaunaka was placed between the two extremes.

- i. There were ritualists, on the one hand, who accepted the divinity of the deities, offered them drink, oblation and prayers, aspiring for material gain.



- ii. There were naturalists, on the other hand, with Yāska as the architect of their school, who denied divinity to the deities thinking that they were nothing but the personified powers of nature. The hordes of deities who entered the Veda were being identified with or merged into the triad—Agni, Indra and Śūrya. The naturalists believed that each of the triad derived multiplicity of names from their different activities and had his common source in Prajāpati, the fountain-head of all creative activities. Among the naturalist Paṇḍits Madhuka, Śvetaketu and Gālava<sup>48</sup> held that the names of the deities were derivable from nine factors while Yāska, Gārgya and Rathītara<sup>49</sup> derived them from four. Śaunaka thought they originated from a single factor, viz., action.<sup>50</sup> A being who came into existence with some form of becoming was linked with a certain action. And as names had no other source than becoming they were all derived from one action or the other.<sup>51</sup> Action became the distinguishing mark of a deity. Whatever characteristic qualities or traits a deity had, were reflected in his name and were the products of his multiplex activities.

Thus the concept of divinity of the deities was founded on the granite rock of action. The naturalists interpreted this concept in terms of the powers of nature illustrated by their mighty deeds. The ritualists traced this concept to the sacrificial rites which could transform a human being into divine. A person could become Indra or Varuṇa or any other deity through certain ceremonial actions. Divinity, in this respect, was but a consequence and not the antecedent of an activity.

In this perspective it is natural to assume that the deities were human beings at their base who became immortal by their glorious deeds.<sup>52</sup> Most of the sages in the *R̥gveda* refer to their common ancestry with the gods. For instance, Aucathya Dīrghatamas<sup>53</sup> speaks of the immortal as the brother of the mortal. Gaya Plāta<sup>54</sup> declares that all gods (*Viśve devāḥ*) are in relation with men and that relationship implies the duties of protection and aid. The same sage<sup>55</sup> asks Maruts whether they



do not recollect their relationship with him. When they next meet at the place of sacrifice, their mother Aditi will confirm their brotherhood. Maitrāvaruṇ Vasiṣṭhn<sup>56</sup>, Pragātha Rāṇva<sup>57</sup> proclaims ancestral friendship and common Kin betwist Aśvins and himself. Again, Pragātha Kāṇva<sup>58</sup> speaks of his common ancestry with Indra. Kusīdi kāṇva<sup>59</sup> suggests Indra, Viṣṇu and Maruts to regard him as their kith and kin. *Aebha* Kaśyapa<sup>60</sup> seeks for Indra's protection which he is entitled to by virtue of his relationship. Virūpa Aṅgīrasa<sup>61</sup> addresses Agni as friend and brother. Manu Vaivasvata<sup>62</sup> refers to his kinship and close alliance with Vasus. Irīmbl̥ṭhi kāṇva<sup>63</sup> asks Ādityas to be kind to him for in the bond of kindred he is bound to them. Mention may also be made of Ṛbhū, Vidhvan and Vāja, sons of Sudhanvan, a descendant of Aṅgīras who obtained divinity by their good works and because entitled to receive praise and adoration.<sup>64</sup> There is also a reference in the *Ṛveda*<sup>65</sup> that Man is the lord of Immortality and has created Divinity out of himself. There are hymns in the *Rgveda*<sup>66</sup> wherein the deity is addressed in the second person as if he stood in human form before the sage.

The foundations of the historical school of Vedic interpretation were laid in the *Rgveda* itself. *Rgveda* is conscious of its own history. There are references to Maruts as sons of Bharata;<sup>67</sup> to Viśvāitra whose prayers protect men of Bhārata<sup>68</sup>; and to Bharatas having suffered usually to some old events with the introductory remarks: some calamity and being again resuscitated by the leadership or vasiṣṭha<sup>69</sup> taska, himself a naturalistic referred: or with the concluding words: तत्रैतिहासमाचक्षेत In इत्यैतिहासिकाः<sup>71</sup> interpreting a word with reference to a Vedic verse he added sometimes an anecdote in relation to that verse. For instance *Rgveda*<sup>72</sup> contains the Legendary history of Devāpi and Śantanu, sons of king Ṛṣiṣeṇṇa or Iṣitasona, Yāska<sup>73</sup> explained the Ṛks historically, though, later on, his commentators<sup>74</sup> could not brook that explanation and imposed a forced and unnatural one in the manner of their School. Again, on the crucial problem whether the deities existed in human form or they were some aerial beings, Yāska<sup>74</sup> had his own opinion. While explaining the opposite views of the Paṇḍita on this point



he held that some of their activities could be interpreted symbolically, but not all and, accordingly, they could be recognized as personal or impersonal. But inasfar as the recorders of events, the sages, were concerned they derived their knowledge from existing oral tradition or from direct vision.<sup>76</sup> That each recorder had his or her own style of recording an event was noticed by Yāska<sup>77</sup> himself.

Turing to the *Bṛhaddevatā* we find that on certain points of historical importance Śaunaka cited the views of old recorders. While interpreting RV.I.129,6,7 he referred to Śākaṭāyana to support that the couplet was a story of king Bhāvayavya and Romaśā his wife in connection with Indra.<sup>78</sup> Commenting on RV. on VIII.807 he<sup>79</sup> cited Yāska and Bhāguri to confirm that the story of Apālā and Indra was a factual romance. He regarded RV.X.17.1,2 as the *Itihāsa* of Vivasvat and ivaṣṭṛ and referred to Yāska in confirmation of his view.<sup>80</sup> According to Śākaṭāyana and Yāska<sup>80</sup> RV.X.102 was an *Itihāsa* but whether it related to Druḡhna, Indra or Vaiśvadeva there was difference of opinion betw Purūavas and eervasi was an *ihihāsa* definitely, though according to Yāska it was a dialogue (*saṁvāda*). Śaunaka cited the authorities sometime without mentioning their name to indicate that his views were shared by other.

In the historical interpretation of certain *ṛks* Śaunaka has a glorious role. His *Bṛhaddevatā* contains aloud forty old legends on deities, sages and kings. Descended from old generations by oral transmission, they possess an authoritative validity. Śaunaka's interpretation of them has won him well deprived recognition in having been quoted approvingly by such celebrated interpreters as sadguruśiṣya, Veṅkata and Sāyaṇa.

## References :

1. Iv. 56. 4.
1. Nirukta I.20 :  
सादास्वृतयर्माण कथयो बभूवुः। तेऽवरेप्योऽसाक्षात्कृतध्मेभ्य उपदेशेन मन्त्रान सम्प्रादुः।  
उपदेशाय ग्लायन्तोऽवरे बिल्मग्रहणायमं ग्रन्थ समाम्नासिधुः।
2. Ibid., .16 :  
यदि मन्त्रार्थप्रत्ययाय, अनर्थकं भवतीति कोत्सः। अनर्थका हि मन्त्राः।



3. Ibid., I. 12  
नामान्याख्यातजानोति शाकटायनां नेरुशतसमयश्च।
4. Ibid. II.2 :  
तद् यत्र स्वरान्तान्तरान्तस्थान्तर्थातुर्मवति तत्र द्विप्रकृतीनां स्थानामिति प्रदिशन्ति।
5. Ibid., II.1 :  
अर्थनित्यः परीक्षेत।
6. Ibid., II.16 :  
तत्को वृत्रः? मेघ इति नेरुक्ता। ... वहिवत्तु खलु मन्त्रवणां ब्राह्मणवादाश्च।
7. Ibid., II.13 :  
आदित्यः कस्मात्? आदते रसान्। आदो भासं ज्योतिषाम्।  
आदोप्तो भासेति वा। वदितेः पुत्र हति वा।
8. B.D. II. 109.
9. Ibid., II. 110.
10. Ibid. II. 111.
11. Ibid., II.112.
12. Ibid., II. 113.
13. Ibid., II. 114.
14. Ibid., II.114
15. Ibid., II.114
15. Ibid., II. 115, 116.
16. Ibid., II. 117, 118.
- अर्थात्पदं स्वामिधेय पदाद्वाक्यार्थनिर्णयः।  
पदसंघातजं वाक्यं वर्णसंघातजं पदम्॥  
अर्थात्प्रकरणाल्लिङ्गाद् औनित्याद् देशकालतः।  
मन्त्रेष्वर्थविवेकः स्याद् इतरेष्विति न स्थितिः।
17. Nirukta II. 1.
18. B.D. II. 101 :  
लिङ्गं धातुं विमर्षितं न सिन्मेत्।
19. B.D. II. 99-104.
20. Nirukta X. 21 : 1  
प्रयीतेः त्रायते,  
2. सम्मिन्वानः द्रवति,  
3. मेदयतेवां।
21. Ibid., X. 38 : वेनेः कान्तिकर्मणः, of Naighaṇṭuka II. 6.
22. B.D. II. 53. cf. Naighaṇṭuka II. 14.
23. Nirukta II. 24. cf. Ibid., X. 22.
24. B.D. II. 49 :  
मित्रिकृत्य जना विश्वे यदिमं पयुंषासते। मित्रं हत्याह तेनैनं विश्वामित्रः स्तुवन्स्वयम्॥



25. Nirukta. X. 24.
26. B.D. II. 51.
27. Nirukta II. 23. वथैतन्नदीवत्।
28. B.D. II. 135 :  
 सरस्वतीति द्विविध्मृदा मर्वासु सा स्तुता।  
 नदीवदेवतावन्न तत्राचायेस्तु शौनकः।  
 नदीवन्निगमाः षट् ते स्तमो नेत्युवा च हे।
29. Ibid., II.137 :  
 अ- येका च दृवङ्कृत्यां चित्र इत्त्व सरस्वती।  
 इयं शुष्मेनिरित्येतं मेने यास्कस्तु सप्तमम्॥
30. B.D. II. 138 :  
 पक्षोः सारस्वतस्यैतां याज्यां मैत्रायणीयके।  
 प्राधान्याद्धविषः पश्चन् वाच खेतराऽन्नवीत्॥
31. cf. Nirukta VII. 5 ff. Note the expressions used by Yāska :  
 कर्मात्मानः कर्मजन्मानः हतरेतरप्रकृतयः (देवताः)।
32. B.D. I.24
33. Ibid., I. 26.
34. Ibid., I. 27 :  
 सर्वाण्येतानि नामानि कर्मतस्त्वाह शौनकः।
35. B.d. I. 28-31
36. R.V. X. 63.4.
37. Ibid., . 164. 38.
38. Ibid., X. 63.1.
39. R.V. x. 64.13.
40. Ibid., VII. 72.2
41. Ibid., VIII. 10.3.
42. Ibid., VIII. 52.10
43. Ibid., VIII. 72.7.
44. Ibid., VIII. 86.7.
45. Ibid., VIII. 43, 14, 16
46. Ibid., VIII. 27.10.
47. Ibid., VIII. 18.19.
48. R.V. III. 60.1.
49. Ibid., X. 90.2
50. Ibid., X. 152.4; 153.2
51. Ibid., II. 36.2 भरतस्तु सुनवः
52. Ibid., VII. 33.6
53. Nirukta XII. 10; IX.23.



54. Ibid., II. 16.

55. R.v. X. 98. 5,7.

56. Nirukta II.10.

57. e.g. Durga

58. Nirukta VII. 6,7 :

अथाकारचिन्तनं देवानाम्। .. पुरुषविधाः स्युरित्येकम्; अपुरुषविधाः स्युरित्यपरम्। अपि वा  
उभयविधाः स्युः।

59. Ibid., I.20 :

साक्षात्कृतधमांगं ऋषयो बभुवुः।

60. Nirukta X. 42 :

अभ्यासे भूयांसमर्थं मन्यन्ते। यथा -अहां दर्शनीयः जहाँ दर्शनीय इति। तत् परुच्छेषक्षय  
शीलम्॥

61. Ibid., VIII.11.

62. B.D. VIII. 153 :

संवाद मन्यते 'यास्क इतिहासं तु शौनकः।

63. Ibid., IV. 46 :

इतिहासः पुरावृत्त ऋषिभिः परिकीर्त्यते। 1



## Thoughts on the Gītā

Amidst a mass of seemingly disparate matter and the apparent multiplicity of views a discerning critic would naturally ask : what is, if at all, the central teaching of the *Bhagavadgītā*. Before an answer to this is attempted, it would be in the fitness of things if notice is taken of the circumstances in which it came into being. In the vast dreary lands of Kurukshetra the two mighty armies of the Kaurvas and the Pāṇḍavas stood facing each other. The conches had been blown, the drums beaten and the bugles sounded. The strike order was imminent. Exactly at the crucial moment Arjuna, the bravest of the Pāṇḍavas, asked Kṛṣṇa, his charioteer, to take the chariot to the vacant space between the two armies so that he could have a full view of those to whom he was going to give the fight. The charioteer did as asked and Arjuna cast a glance at his adversaries. He found among them, his brothers, his brothers-in-law, his uncles and other relations. Remorse overstruck him. He became diffident for fight. He could not summon up courage to strike at his kith and kin, the grand father like Bhīṣma and the teacher like Droṇa among them. He decided not to fight. Occupying now the back seat in the chariot he told Kṛṣṇa that he was experiencing a strange kind of sensation in him, his limbs were aching, his mouth drying up and his body trembling. He would not like, said he, to enjoy the worldly pleasures soaked in the blood of his near and dear ones. Noticing him in this state Kṛṣṇa decided to shake him out of his melancholy. He disapproved of his decision of not offering to fight and told him to get ready for it.

He was sorry that impurity should have crept into Arjuna's mind at the oddest of the hours :

कुतस्त्वा कश्मलमिदं विषमे समु पस्थितम्।

He asked him not to be unmanly, to give up the weakness of the heart and get up :



क्लैव्यं मां स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते।

क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्त्वोत्तिष्ठ परन्तप॥८

and further

तस्मादुत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः।

Get up O Arjuna ! with a resolve to fight.  
This is the beginning of the *Gītā*. After listening to the Lord Arjuna said :

नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयाऽच्युत।

स्थितोऽस्मि गतसन्देहः करिष्ये वचनं तवा॥

O Kṛṣṇa, my delusion is over. Through your grace I have got knowledge. My doubts are cleared. I (now) stand up. I will obey your word.

And that is the end of the *Gītā*.

Its beginning is 'उत्तिष्ठ', get up. Its end is 'स्थितोऽस्मि' here I stand. Between these two lies the *Gītā*.

Its motive, its objective should be all too clear with it. What was it that the Lord gave to Arjuna that made him stand up स्थितोऽस्मि ?

It was a kind of philosophy that imparted him clear perspective, infused him with new vigour to take up arms once again, the philosophy of Karmayoga, for which the *Gītā* is well known the world over. It is this philosophy which forms the core of the teaching of the great work. Here a side question may well arise : why should the Lord have waited upto the particular moment of the two armies facing each other and Arjuna's indifference to fight at the sight of his friends, relatives and elders to impart this knowledge. By imparting it earlier he could well have avoided this situation to arise. Why, at that particular moment? After all Kṛṣṇa had been very intimate with Arjuna all along who could well take the liberty of addressing him as Kṛṣṇa, Yādava and Sakhā-friend, 'हे कृष्ण हे यादव हे सखेति', so intimate was he with the Lord that he could well instruct him in superior knowledge and not keep it back from him. He was also related to him. Why did he not then impart the knowledge to him earlier? The answer to this could be that the superior



knowledge has to be imparted judiciously and at the right moment. It is not to be given away to any one and everyone but only to those who have developed the spirit of a disciple, शिष्यभाव. In that spirit they would be ripe to receive it and can conserve it. Though intimate, Arjuna had not upto the particular moment of the sermon assumed the शिष्यभाव. He had been a friend, a companion and a relative but not शिष्य. It is when sorrow overtook him and confusion stalled him that he acquired the spirit of a शिष्य.

यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्नश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम्।

“Please tell me whatever is best in your judgment. I surrender unto you. I am your disciple.”

When the friend in the Arjuna had turned a disciple with the feeling of total प्रपत्ति, शरणागति, only then was he considered fit enough to receive the superiormost knowledge, the most secret one, गुह्याद् गुह्यतरं ज्ञानम् which in the words of the *Gītā* itself could not be imparted to any one who has not the proper religious austerity, renunciation and devotion to God nor to the one who does not want to listen or who finds fault with God:

इदं ते नातपस्काय नाभक्ताय कदाचन।

न चाशुश्रूषवे वाच्यं न च मां योऽभ्यसूयति॥

In his marathon address to Arjuna the Lord has given this highest knowledge. He has instructed him in Sāṃkhya-yoga, Jñānayoga, Rājayoga, Karmayoga and Bhaktiyoga. The knowledge of all the Vedas and the systems of philosophy is contained in his words. Arjuna is afforded the cosmic vision by Him. In answer to a specific question of Arjuna the Lord said that Karmayoga, in complete surrender to Him was best suited for him. He cleared all the doubts in Arjuna's mind with reasons and examples till he was fully satisfied. The Lord would, however, not ask Arjuna to follow His instruction blindly. Even the Lord of the Universe, he has a liberal attitude. He has no idea to impose his will on his disciple. He asks him to think over what he has said and then do whatever would please him:

विमृश्यैतदशेषेण यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु।



There is no dogmatic or doctrinaire approach in the *Gītā*. If instruction is well received it would cause reaction from within. If it fails to do so, well, it is the recipient's lot. If, however, the recipient is ripe for it as the parched earth is for rain water, it may not fail to produce reaction as in the case of Arjuna, who received it with equanimity after initial dithering even in the thick of the battlefield. Arjuna was the *prapanna śiṣya*-शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम्\* who begged for instruction, शाधि. It was, therefore, not unexpected that the wealth of knowledge emanating from the Lord would not fail to enlighten him.

As has been said earlier the core of the *Gītā*'s teaching is action. The *Gītā* declares in the most solemn words : 'कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः'<sup>9</sup>, action is superior to inaction. The *Gītā* preaches active life. It does not require one to take to the life of a recluse to gain true knowledge. One can gain that even in the thick of life's activities just as did the Rājarṣis like Janaka,—कर्मणैव हि संसिद्धिमास्थिता जनकादयः!<sup>10</sup>, who, while fully preoccupied with the royal duties, remained completely untouched by them. The ego was just missing in them. That is why they could say :

मिथिलायां प्रदीप्तायां न मे दहति किञ्चन।

"Even while Mithila is on fire there is nothing mine in which is being burnt."

Since they were one with the Supreme Reality, Brahman, they, even though possessed of body, were bereft of its consciousness. That is why they could come out with the words:

कश्चिन्मे दक्षिणं बाहुं चन्दनेन समुक्षपेत्।

सर्व्वं छिन्धात्कुटारेण समावेतौ यतौ मम॥

"One anointing my right arm with sandal paste and the other chopping off my left one with a spade, both are the same for me."

The philosophy of action of the *Gītā* is qualified with the inalienable consideration of no desire for the fruit. The key verse enunciating it says :

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन।

मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूः ..... ॥



“Your duty is limited upto the performance of the action only and not its fruit. Do not be the cause of the fruit of the action.”

The Lord is only too conscious of the pitfalls in this. There is a well-known saying in Sanskrit : प्रयोजनमनुद्दिश्य न हि मन्दोऽपि प्रवर्तते, even a fool would not take to something without a motive. The result of the action is the motive. If the motive is taken away the natural tendency in a man would be not to perform any action. Why should he perform it at all if he is not to get anything out of it ? Realizing this tendency in man the Lord is quick to utter the solemn warning immediately after instructing him not to care for the result of action, not to give himself over to inaction—मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि.<sup>12</sup> The Lord knows that inaction by its very nature would not be foreign to man. To keep his body and soul together he will have to perform some action or the other all through :

शरीरान्नाऽपि च ते न प्रसिद्ध्येदकर्मणः।<sup>13</sup>

Engage one has to oneself in some action or the other, not even for a moment can be one without an action :

नहि कश्चित् क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत ।<sup>14</sup>

It is the deliberate inaction that he is asking to avoid. The stillness of the body is not inaction. With the bodily movements controlled, the mind may be free to wander about. To all appearances a man may give the impression of not engaged in action, yet he would be as given to performing action as anybody else. In this he will be deceiving nobody but himself. The Lord in the most forthright words proclaims him a hypocrite, मिथ्याचार :

कर्मेन्द्रियाणि संयम्य य आस्ते मनसा स्मरन्।

इन्द्रियार्थान् विमूढात्मा मिथ्याचारः स उच्यते॥<sup>15</sup>

So action one has to perform but the Lord advises one to perform it in such a way as one may not have any consideration of its fruit. The Lord illustrates this by his own example, may be it can go home : There is nothing to be gained or achieved by Him that He does not have already, as far as He is concerned, still says He, He continues to work:



न मेपार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किञ्चन।  
नाना वाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि॥<sup>16</sup>

The Lord says that a being should keep His example before him. He should continue doing things without caring for their fruit. But a being may here well say : Well the Lord can do it. He is Lord after all. But how can he 'a poor being' do it? The Lord is asking him to do something impossible. The Lord realizes this predicament of his and says that in case it is not possible for him to do so in absolute terms, let him be the medium and it is here that the philosophy of action of the *Gītā*, the Karmayoga imperceptibly glides into the philosophy of Devotion, the Bhaktiyoga. The Lord asks man to offer everything to him, whatever he is doing, whatever he is eating, whatever he is offering in sacrifice, whatever he is giving away (in charity) and whatever penance he is practising :

यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत्।  
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम्॥<sup>17</sup>

Even if the consideration of motive cannot be set aside by an ordinary mortal, let him offer all his actions to the Lord. Then the actions will cease *suo moto* to be those of his and the fruit, if any, emanating from them will also cease to be that of his. The Lord unequivocally declares :

ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि मयि सन्त्यस्य मत्पराः।  
अनन्येनैव योगेन मां ध्यायन्त उपासते॥  
तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता मृत्युसंसारसागरात्।  
भवामि न चिरात्पार्थ मय्यावेशितचेतसाम्॥<sup>18</sup>

"These who surrender unto me, who offer me all actions and who meditate on me, who concentrate on me in their minds, I pull them out before long from the ocean of life and death.

Whether actions are performed without desire for their fruit in absolute terms or whether they are performed in the name of the Lord being offered to him together with their fruit, they are to be performed with full understanding. He asks Arjuna to take refuge in knowledge—बुद्धौ शरणमन्विच्छ<sup>19</sup>. An action done without understanding, according to him, is inferior to that done with it—दूरेण ह्यवरं कर्म बुद्धयोगात्<sup>20</sup>. An understanding person casts



off good and evil in this very life : बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृत-दुष्कृते.<sup>21</sup> The Karmayoga here imperceptibly glides into the Jñānayoga.

The term Yoga has been defined by the Lord in two ways. समत्वं योग उच्यते<sup>22</sup>, equanimity is Yoga and योगः कर्मसु कौशलम्<sup>23</sup> - Yoga is proficiency in actions. The two definitions give the feeling that two different, unrelated things are being said here. That actually is not so. An intelligent person, *buddhiyuktah* has the wisdom to analyse the world. He sees it full of miseries, even the pleasures which appear agreeable in the beginning turn out to be unpleasant in the end. There is nothing permanent in the world, everything is temporary and fleeting. The good and pleasant must be followed, as a rule, by the bad and the unpleasant, as much as a day is followed by night. The inevitable pairs of opposites ; the *Dvandva-s* are the root cause of suffering. The best way to overcome it is to develop equanimity of mind—*Samatva*. The mind then will not be influenced by them. But this is not hardening the heart or developing callousness which are individualized self defence and lack of understanding of the reality. In the Yoga of action there is complete and total dedication to work; there is no shunning the work and its results, pleasant and unpleasant. One takes to the Yoga of action of purity, the senses and the mind with the firm understanding, *jñāna*, that the Ātman is free and unaffected by the external world and that the confusing factors are the sense organs and their objects. The purification of the mind cannot be brought about by only sitting aloof. It can be done by skilful performance of one's duty forsaking the ego, doership; enjoyment of fruits of action is *yoga* of action : Karmayoga in its conjunction with Jñānayoga.

While referring to the *Jñāna* above it has been said that it means the understanding that the Ātman is completely unaffected by what goes on around. It is here that the Jñānayoga imperceptibly glides into the Sāṃkhyayoga. The Ātman is eternal, omnipresent, permanent, immovable and everlasting :

नित्यः सर्वगतः स्थाणुरचलोऽयं सनातनः।<sup>24</sup>



It is the body which perishes and not the soul which is unmanifest, unimaginable and immutable. What really it is, is difficult to say. There is nothing tangible with which it can be compared. The Upaniṣads rightly, therefore, describe it, नेति, नेति not this, not this; people look at it as wonder so they speak and hear of it as wonder. They know not what it is. While performing an action one should have the understanding that it is one's body and the senses that would be engaged in it and not the soul whose effulgent light is discerned after piercing through the hard shell of ego that envelopes wisdom by dispassion, *asaṅga*, *karma-phala-tyāga*, *buddhi* and discrimination. But before this can be attempted, a strict control over the mind and the senses is an absolute necessity. And here come the *Aṣṭāṅgayoga* that helps one exercise self-control. The Lord knows that the mind is fickle, strong, impetuous wayward :

चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्ण प्रमाथि बलवद्दृढम्<sup>25</sup>

If that is the state of mind, the state of the senses can well be imagined. The mind is compared to a charioteer and the senses to the horses. If the charioteer is out of control the horses are bound to go astray, particularly when the horses are wayward—इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि. The mind has first to be put under control which can be done by means of practice and non-attachment :

अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते<sup>26</sup>

The senses then are to be put under restraint —तानि सर्वाणि संयम्य.<sup>27</sup> One has to elevate oneself to the state of स्थितप्रज्ञ unperturbed in sorrow with no craving for pleasures, with all attachment, fear and anger gone, remaining blissful in Ātman—आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः<sup>28</sup> and still doing his duties skilfully, the skill being in doing them without any desire for their fruit and with the full understanding that the soul will remain unaffected by them.

Freedom from attachment and absence of egotism is the hallmark of realized souls. It is not the freedom obtained by shunning the world and remaining in seclusion or the freedom to do things at will in which one is bound to feel the individuality and build the ego. It is living in the world, unaffected by it and



destroying the ego. When the ego is completely erased the individual emerges with the universal. There remains no distinction between the self and the non-self, myriads of names and forms merge into the non-dual Brahman. This is the supreme state, free from duality and the delusion born of it. Fixed in that state even at the end, the time of death, one attains the bliss of Brahman :

एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य विमुह्यति।

स्थित्वास्यामन्तकालेऽपि ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृच्छति।<sup>१७</sup>

## References

1. *Bhagavadgītā*, II.2.
2. *Ibid.*, II.3.
3. *Ibid.*, II. 37.
4. *Ibid.*, XVIII.73.
5. *Ibid.*, II.7.
6. *Ibid.*, XVIII. 67.
7. *Ibid.*, XVIII. 63.
8. *Ibid.*, II.7.
9. *Ibid.*, III. 8.
10. *Ibid.*, III.20.
11. *Ibid.*, II.47.
12. *ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*, III.8.
14. *Ibid.*, III.5.
15. *Ibid.*, III.6.
16. *Ibid.*, III. 22.
17. *Ibid.*, IX. 27.
18. *Ibid.*, XII. 6,7.
19. *Ibid.*, II.49.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*, II.50.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*, II.24.
25. *Ibid.*, VI.34.
26. *Ibid.*, VI.35.
27. *Ibid.*, II.61.
28. *Ibid.*, II.55.
29. *Ibid.*, II. 72.



## Gītā : For Youth

One the very holy occasion of Eighth International Gītā Conference, Chicago Illinois, U.S.A. July 1-3, 1989, a very humble devotee of the *Gītā* from the land of *Gītā*, is addressing the youth of Aimerica, the country about which Reverend Jesse L. Jackson says

*America is not like a Blanket- one piece of unbroken cloth. America is more like a quilt—many patches, many pieces, many colors, many sizes, all woven together by a common thread.*

The ardent urge of American young people for spectacular happiness has, like a magnet, caused all the devotees of *Gītā* from all over the world to disseminate happiness to the whole universe.

The *Bhagavad Gītā* is the conscience of India and the ultimate test of a country's conscience may be its willingness to sacrifice something today for future generation whose words of thanks will not be heard.

This life of ours is like a ten-speed bike. Most of us have gears we never use. The *Bhagavad Gītā* teaches us not only to use all ten gears but much more than that.

The *Bhagavad Gītā* is the Song of God as well as the Song about God. It is a song of divine order which has permanent value and which has stood and continues to stand the test of time. It is the music of life which has double capacity of arresting the heart and holding the intellect simultaneously. The *Gītā* is like a deep ocean; the more one controls one's breath and remains at the bottom, the greater the amount of pearls can one collect from the bed of the ocean. Likewise, the more intensely one follows the *Gītā* and practices the tenets enunciated therein, the greater becomes one's intellectual and spiritual achievements. The *Gītā* is a spiritual reference book which contains



the sum and substance of advanced thought, explained and illustrated in an easy flowing language, which has a universal appeal as it envisions a religion which comes from within.

### The Journey Starts from Purely Physical Aspect

“A sound mind in a sound body” — the superstructure and its many- side architectural excellence cannot exist unless the buildings has a firm foundation. Likewise, one cannot build a spiritual life unless one possesses a sound physique. Human beings are classified into three main divisions according to their outstanding capacities :

- i. those possessed of a greater amount of physical stamina;
- ii. those having a preponderantly emotional nature; and
- iii. those possessed of intellectual brilliance.

The *Gītā* makes this classification clear and then prescribes the way each class of people is to follow to reach “The Kingdom of God” or enjoy everlasting bliss.

People having a restless temperament can follow the *Karmamārga* or the path of action, those that are emotionally inclined can follow the *Bhaktimārga* or the way of devotion and those whose power of discrimination is sharp and are always on the alert can follow the *Jñānamārga* or the path of knowledge. Thus the *Gītā* gives everyone ample scope to unite his soul with God. The temperamentally active persons can, by righteous deeds or actions that are pleasing to God pursue their spiritual path.

*abhyāse 'py asamartho 'si matkarmaparamo bhava  
madartham api karmāni kurvan siddhim avāpsyāsi'*

“If you are unable even to perform the *Yoga* of practice, then be as one whose supreme aim is My service; even performing actions for My sake, you shall attain perfection.”

Cleanliness is next to Godliness. Physical cleanliness is the index of mental health and spiritual purity. If the body is healthy, the mind can be clean; if the mind is clean, thoughts arising in it will be flawless, the words will be pure; if the words are pure the actions will be pious; if the actions are pious the result will be truthful. So it goes without saying that physical purity has



its own values in the spritual life also.

The *Gītā* aims at the attainment of individual equanimity at every level; physical and mental. It expects every one to possess a sound physical constitution. The body should not only be free from diseases and deformities but should have a resisting capacity to extreme heat and cold. Further, the body should be trained and cultivated in such a manner as to experience alike, the pairs of opposities, pain and pleasure and the like. Such a type of physical neutrality is the foundation for intellectual equipoise :

*śītoṣṇaṣukhaduḥkheṣu samaḥ saṅgavivarjitah*<sup>2</sup>

“(The person) who is alike in cold and heat, pleasure and pain and who is free from attachment.”

Thus, from the physical and physiological points of view the *Gītā* aims at the harmonious development of man.

Every profession requires and demands certain special abilities and traits. If a person does not possess the requisite qualifications, he cannot succeed in that career. A soldier should have enormous physical strenght, a technician must possess sound technical knowledge, a lawyer should possess the gift of speech, an author must have a good command of language, and a man who practises religion should have the right type of mental aptitude. The religion envisioned by the *Gītā* has wide appeal because it caters to the needs of people with different mental make-ups. So, it stands to reason that mental propensity is an essential qualification for a person to embrace a faith.

Though there are three main paths — the paths of action, devotion and knowledge— the ultimate goal is one and the same. For instance, a man may travel from one place to another by scooter, car, bus, train, ship or plane. The choice of the vehicle depends mainly on his financial capacity and next on his whims and fancies. Though people may travel by different kinds of vehicles, under normal conditions, it is certain that all of them will reach their destination. Similarly, the follower of each path shall certainly reach his/her goal, provided he/she has fixed his/her mind on God. Such single-minded devotion is emphasized throughout the *Gītā* :



*mayy āveśya mano ye mām nityayuktā upāśate  
śraddhayā parayo 'petās te me yuktatmā matāḥ*<sup>3</sup>

"Those who fixing their minds on Me worship Me, ever earnest and possessed of supreme faith- them do I consider most perfect in *yoga*."

From the spiritual point of view, the fundamental condition expected of every man is the control of his senses. The concept of Lord Kṛṣṇa serving as a charioteer conveys a great message. When man controls his senses and is guided by unprejudiced reason, he certainly lifts himself from the animal plane to the spiritual one :

*śreyo hi jñānam abhyāsāt jñānād dhyānam viśiṣyate  
dhyānāt karmaphalatyāgas tyāgāc chāntir anantaram*<sup>4</sup>

"Better indeed is knowledge than the practice (of concentration), better than knowledge is meditation; better than meditation is the renunciation of the fruit of action: On renunciation (follows) immediate peace."

Here in this verse is the message of human happiness. It trains every devotee to live in the world without becoming worldly, as the water drop on the lotus leaf.

### The Second Stop : Social Aspect

The *Gītā* appeals to the social consciousness of people to a large extent. Man should acquire such perfection that he could live without injuring others and his mental stability should be such as would not be upset by anything. In order to enjoy social liberty and social harmony man should be absolutely free from envy, fear and anxiety :

*adveṣṭā sarvabhūtanām maitraḥ karuṇa eva ca  
nirmamo nirahaṁkāraḥ samaduḥkhsukhaḥ kṣamī*<sup>5</sup>

"He who has no ill will to any being, who is friendly and compassionate, free from egoism and self sense, even-minded in pain and pleasure and forgiving."

How important is the message of the *Gītā* to the man as a social being may be corroborated by the following report of American Health magazine. "Explosion of new research is pointing to the benefits of altruism." It reports the results of a



University of Michigan study of 2,700 people over a period of fourteen years which indicates that people, especially men, with no close social or community relationships have a death rate 2.5 times that of people who are actively involved with other people. A University of California study of 7,000 people over a period of nine years found that those who were single, had few friends or relatives and shunned community organization had more than twice the mortality rate of others - regardless of race, income, physical activity, or other life-style factors.

Hans Selye, a pioneer in modern stress research, was of the opinion that by helping people you inspire their gratitude and affection, which helps protect you from stress. This is the warm feeling which results from endorphins, the brain's natural tranquilizers. Through the neural link between the mind and our immune system, such altruism may result in an increase of the cells, produced in bone marrow and the spleen, which are needed to fight infection.

A Harvard psychologist discovered that showing his students a film of Mother Teresa working among Calcutta's sick and poor resulted in an increase of immunoglobulin A, an antibody that combats respiratory infections. In one of the "Type A and Type B" personalities, a University of Florida psychologist found that many characteristics of the type 'A' profile were harmless. "Only a few of those characteristics -anger, irritability and aggressive competitiveness—seem to put people at a higher risk for heart attack." A Duke University study found that the more hostile the person, the more blocked his coronary arteries were.

### The Third Stop : The Intellectual Aspect

The very purpose of *Jñānamārga* or the way of wisdom implies the realization of God through the intellectual process. One should anchor one's intellect in God. The *Gītā* prepares man to comprehend and digest the real philosophy of life with much ease. It becomes very clear when we study the *śloka*:

*vyavasāyātmikā buddhir eke'ha kurunandana  
bahuśakhā hy anantāś ca buddhaya'vyavasāyinām*<sup>6</sup>

"O joy of the Kurus (Arjuna), the resolute (decided)



understanding is single; but the thoughts of the irresolute (undecided) are many-branched and endless.”

Single-minded concentration is the first and foremost requisite of each and every action. This applies from making a perfect sewing needle to most sophisticated sputnik.

### **The Fourth Stop: The Spiritual Aspect**

One's spiritual bliss lies not only in peace but in completely identifying oneself with God, and at the end of the journey we find;

*brahmabhūtaḥ prasannātmā na śocati na kāṅkṣati  
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu madbhaktiṁ labhate parām'*

“Having become one with Brahman and being tranquil in spirit, he neither grieves nor desires. Regarding all beings as alike he attains supreme devotion to Me.”

Many thousand years back, Lord Kṛṣṇā gave this message to Arjuna. The message is clear and forthright and has special meaning for the youth:

Behold! You are capable of having the most perfect body, the sharpest of intellect, the whole universe as your family (*vasudhaiva kuṭumba-kam*) and do not stop till you become 'Brahman'.

### **References**

1. 12.10
2. 12. 18
3. 12. 2
4. 12. 12
5. 12. 13
6. 2.41
7. 18. 54



## Putreṣṭi in the Rāmāyaṇa : Was it Really Necessary

In Sarga 8 of the *Bāla kāṇḍa* of the *Rāmāyaṇa* Daśaratha is mentioned as having deliberations with his ministers for performing a Vājimedha sacrifice for obtaining a son.<sup>1</sup> He asks Sumantra, his Chief Minister, to invite the priests. Sumantra (the Sūta) has heard from the priests the episode of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga relevant to Daśaratha's obtainment of sons as narrated in the presence of the Ṛṣis of old by Sanatkumāra. The episode runs as follows : Kaśyapa's son Vibhāṇḍaka will have a son Ṛṣyaśṛṅga who would recognize no other person than his father, because of his exclusive devotion to him. At that time there will be severe drought in Aṅgadeśa. Its King Romapāda, on the advice of the Brāhmaṇas, will request them to bring Ṛṣyaśṛṅga into his kingdom. The Purohita, etc. fearing the curse of the sage Vibhāṇḍaka, will bring Ṛṣyaśṛṅga with the help of courtesans whereupon it will rain in his kingdom and the king will give in marriage his daughter Śāntā to him. Sage Ṛṣyaśṛṅga will perform the sacrifice for Daśaratha for obtaining sons.<sup>2</sup> Here ends a part of the story of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga as reproduced by Sumantra.

On Daśaratha's query as to how the courtesans managed to bring Ṛṣyaśṛṅga Sumantra says that they could do so by alluring him towards them in a number of ways. They offered him Modakas and other tasty sweets which he took for fruit, he not having tasted them earlier and invited him to their Āśrama. He responded to their invitation and left along with them. In Sarga 10 he says that it is already foreseen by Sanatkumāra that Daśaratha would approach Romapāda and request him to persuade his son-in-law Ṛṣyaśṛṅga to perform the sacrifice for him (Daśaratha). Accordingly Daśaratha having convinced



Vasiṣṭha<sup>3</sup>, approaches Romapāda and brings Ṛṣyaśṛṅga, Śāntā's husband, to his capital. In the spring season he starts preparations for the sacrifice by releasing the sacrificial horse<sup>4</sup> and at the advent of the next spring season the sacrifice proper begins.<sup>5</sup> The Sarga 13 describes the details of the sacrifice. After Vājimedha or Aśvamedha is duly performed, Ṛṣyaśṛṅga performs the Putriyā Iṣṭi at the request of Daśaratha with the "Ātharvaṇa mantras"<sup>6</sup> as a result of which four sons are born of the three queens of Daśaratha.<sup>7</sup>

It may here be pointed out that it has been made clear in the *Rāmāyaṇa* itself that the purpose of Daśaratha's performing the Aśvamedha sacrifice is to beget sons. At more than one place he expressly says this<sup>8</sup>. Even the priests promise him that by performing Aśvamedha, he will obtain four sons.<sup>9</sup>

A contradiction in the narrative appears when Daśaratha is shown to obtain sons, not through Aśvamedha but through the Putriyā Iṣṭi. Naturally the question would arise: When Aśvamedha was enough for obtaining sons, why should a second sacrifice, Putriyā Iṣṭi be needed? The commentators have also felt the contradiction and have tried to offer some sort of explanation. Govindarāja, for instance, says that the Aśvamedha was performed to purge Daśaratha of all the sins after which the latter could perform the Putreṣṭi. He quotes a Vedic text to the effect that one who performs Aśvamedha clears himself even of the sin of Brahmicide.<sup>10</sup> Rāma, the author of the *Tilaka* commentary goes a step further and says that the Aśvamedha was intended to expiate Daśaratha's sin of Brahmicide which he had incurred in the prime of his youth by killing by mistake the young sage Śravaṇa.<sup>11</sup> He puts up the situation thus : If Daśaratha wanted sons for which Putreṣṭi was enough, why should he perform the Aśvamedha at all? This he did, for he had incurred the sin of Brachmicide by killing Śravaṇa. He had to expiate it before he could perform Putreṣṭi. For this purpose Aśvamedha was necessary.

Now Rāma's attempt to provide motivation for Aśvamedha by referring to the Śravaṇa episode is occasioned by a desire to explain away the duplication of sacrifices. But then there is



enough motivation for the Śravaṇa episode in the place in which it occurs. In the *Ayodhyā Kāṇḍa*, just before his death, Daśaratha remembers<sup>12</sup> that in his youth, he had killed a young sage mistaking him for some animal, and his bereaved parents had cursed him that he too would meet a similar death in separation from his children. Thus Daśaratha's agonizing death in separation from his sons is adequately motivated by this episode for which no further justification, as sought by Tilaka, is necessary. On the contrary, if we accept Rāma's explanation, some further contradictions creep in.

- i. In the critical text of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, as well as in the Vulgate, the name of the hunted young sage does not find mention anywhere in the episode. How could Rāma have then got it?
- ii. Again, the young sage himself tells the king that he should have no fear of having killed a Brahmin since he is a Vaiśya's son born of a Śūdrā.<sup>13</sup> How could Rāma have taken his killing as Brahmicide to expiate which Daśaratha had to perform the Aśvamedha?<sup>14</sup>
- iii. Further, as the narrative goes, when he hunted and killed the young ascetic, Daśaratha was only a young man and had not even married Kausalyā.<sup>15</sup> Now, if he was cursed to die in separation from his children, he must at least have them before he could be separated from them. In that case the curse would be a boon in disguise to circumscribe the period of childlessness of Daśaratha who then should not have had the necessity of resorting either to Aśvamedha or to Putreṣṭi for having sons.
- iv. Aesthetically also, Rāma's attempt to explain away the duplicate sacrifice performed with the same motivation anticipated the so-called Śravaṇa episode long before it actually occurs in the course of the epic.
- v. Finally it is better to take Daśaratha's obtainment of the four sons as a result of Aśvamedha rather than of Putreṣṭi since all the three queens who are said to have obtained sons are mentioned by their personal as well



as sacerdotal names only in connection with Aśvamedha.<sup>16</sup> The Putreṣṭi just finds a mention in the Epic without any details.

The cumulative effect of all the above considerations is that if at all, the Aśvamedha should be considered responsible for Daśaratha's obtaining sons, Putreṣṭi is purely duplicate and useless and, therefore, very likely an interpolation in the tale. Consequently the character of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga also which is specially brought in for performing that rite becomes redundant and appears grafted upon the narrative. This should naturally mean that the entire episode of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga is a late addition even to the *Bāla Kāṇḍa* which by consensus is itself a later addition to the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

A question that would naturally pose itself here is : why was its grafting necessary. A clue to this is furnished in the text where it is said that Ṛṣyaśṛṅga performed the Putreṣṭi with the *Ātharvaṇa* mantras. Now Ṛṣyaśṛṅga performed the Putreṣṭi this statement itself would have sufficed. Why special mention of the *Ātharvaṇa* mantras. Our surmise is that the redactor who grafted the Ṛṣyaśṛṅga narrative was an *Atharvavedin* and to show the equal importance of his Veda along with the *Rgveda* that he concocted the narrative and grafted it on that of the Aśvamedha one. This fact also peeps out from the statement that Ṛṣyaśṛṅga was invited with the consent of Vasiṣṭha, *anumānya vasiṣṭham ca*. Again, the sages who approve of Daśaratha's desire to perform Aśvamedha are mentioned, as it were in two groups, one headed by Vasiṣṭha and the other by Ṛṣyaśṛṅga.<sup>17</sup> Actually whenever Vasiṣṭha is mentioned the name of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga also occurs almost without fail.<sup>18</sup> Further, the attempt to show Ṛṣyaśṛṅga as predestined for the purpose of Daśaratha's begetting sons is only too crude to introduce an *Atharvaṇa* Ṛṣi into the narrative to show the importance and the efficacy of the Veda, the *Atharvaveda*, to which the redactor might have belonged.



## References

1. Bāla Kāṇḍa. 8.2-3.
2. ibid. 8.5-22.
3. ibid. 10.13 : *Anumānya Vasiṣṭham ca.*
4. ibid. 11.8, 11, 14, 19.
5. ibid. 12, 13.
6. ibid. 14.2-3.
7. ibid. 15.8 ff.
8. ibid. 8.2: *Sutārtham vājimedhena kimartham na yajāmy aham*  
ibid. 11.2-3: *...tam vipram...*  
*yajñāya varayāmāsa santānārtham kulasya ca*  
*tatheti ca sa rājānam uvāca ca susatkr̥taḥ*||  
*sambhārāḥ sambhriyantām te turagaś ca vimucyatām*  
*mama lālapyamānasya putrārtham nāsti vai śukham*  
*tadartham hayamedhena yakṣyāmīti matir mama*||  
ibid. 11.8:
9. *sambhārāḥ sambhriyantām te turagaś ca vimucyatām*  
*sarvathā prāpsyase putrān caturo 'mitavikramāni*  
ibid. 11.11-12.
10. See his commentary on the beginning of Bāla Kāṇḍa. 12 :  
*evam Daśarathaḥ sarvakāmasamṛddho 'pi putrālābhasantaptas*  
*tanmūlāni pāpāni svādhikārānurūpeṇāśvamedhena vinā na*  
*vināśyanūti manvānaḥ* 'sarva pāpmānaṁ tarati tarati brahmaha-  
*tyām yo 'śvamedhena yajata* 'iti śrutyā 'rājā sārvaabhaumo 'śva -  
*medhena yajeta* 'iti smṛtyā *ca brahmavadhasamapāpotpattyā*  
*tatprāyaścittenaśvamedhānuṣṭhānaṁ bodhyam. vihitam*  
*aśvamedham yaṣṭum samkalpya...* etc. Again towards the end of  
that Sarga.
11. *yady api putrakāṣṭyaiva putrāvāptiḥ sambhavati, tathāpi*  
*taporatasya Vaiśyasya Śravaṇasya vadhe tadviyogāturata-*  
*poratatanmātāpitṛmarāṇe ca brahmavadhasamapāpotpattyā*  
*tatprāyaścittenaśvamedhānuṣṭhānaṁ bodhyam.* Tilaka on Bāla  
Kāṇḍa. 14.60 Niranya Sagar Press, Bombay.
12. Ayk. 57-58.
13. *na dvijāṭir aham rājan mā bhūṭ te manaso vyathāi*  
*Śūdrāyāṁ asmi Vaiśyena jāto janapadādhipaṇi*  
Ayk. 57.37
14. See f.n. No. 3.
15. *devy anūḍhā tvam abhavo*  
*yuvārājo bhavāmy aham.*  
Ayk. 57.10



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16.    *hotā'dhvaryus tathodgātā hayena samayojayanī  
mahīṣyā parivṛtṭyā 'īha vāvātām aparāṁstathāḥ*

Bāla Kāṇḍa. 13.28.

17.    *ibid. 11.10c : Vasiṣṭhapramukhāḥ sarve  
and 11.11a : Ṛṣyaśṛṅgapurogās ca.*
18.    *ibid. 11.10-11, 12.33, 12, 34, 13.2, 13.42.*



## The Concept of Fate in the Rāmāyaṇa

Fate and Destiny—these are the two terms that are so often heard in everyday life. Though mysterious themselves they help to clear up many a mystery of the human life. Reason and fate do not go together. When reason fails fate steps in.

But what is this fate after all? This question has rocked people's minds since ages. Fate is a power the existence of which is inferred from the chance-occurrences which are not infrequent in life. When something unaccountable happens it is attributed to fate. What fate actually is nobody knows, for nobody has seen it. Yet it is believed to exist for it cannot be imagined that a particular incident or event happens all by itself. There must be supposed to be an invisible hand that creates a particular set of circumstances which by no stretch of imagination can be foreseen. The events and occurrences which cannot be explained away are supposed to be due to some unseen power which always has something up its sleeves and which brings it out only occasionally and spasmodically. This is what is popularly known as chance. This chance element plays an important part in human life. It is only this chance which is given the exalted name of fate.

But this form of arbitrary fate has not appealed much to the Indian mind. It has accepted the Kṛtānta form of it. All along the Indian tradition fate has been believed to be the accumulated effect of the actions done in previous births. Thus it would seem that fate is intimately connected with the theory of Karman. When anything unaccountable takes place in a man's life he feels agitated about it. Why should this happen like that? But the next moment the agitation disappears and in a mood of resignation he says, 'fate had ordained it so'. Fate is the cause he has found of the effect he has seen. After all, cause must precede an effect. And it is not always necessary that the cause



may be visible. Fate or the effect of the actions in the previous births is such an invisible cause. When a man is born blind or loses his eyesight afterwards, or when a child loses his parents after two years of its birth and suffers all sorts of privations and miseries, it is explained away as due to the working of fate which actually means that these unfortunate things are due to some bad actions performed by a man in his previous births.

For as long back as one can see human mind has ungrudgingly accepted an independent entity called fate to which all the chance-events and chance-occurrences have been attributed. But as and as man has advanced in knowledge the field for fate's playful activity has gone on shrinking. Man has now learnt to establish the relationship of cause and effect with regard to things which were once supposed to be due to 'Daiva' or fate. There was a time when drought or floods or storms were also supposed to be due to the working of fate. But as and as man has advanced towards knowledge, these have got out of the purview of fate. Today science explains many things which were hitherto considered to be mysterious. With the advancement of scientific knowledge, therefore, fate has lost much of its importance. But be that as it may the basic concept of fate or chance clings to man all the world over. Where science fails or establish a definite cause and effect relationship, 'adr̥ṣṭa' or fate is thought to be in operation there. As in the primitive races so in the most civilized societies of the present day the basic concept of fate still persists. This is interesting inasmuch as it explains the working of the human mind. This is human psychology to find in the mysterious things the working of some unseen power 'adr̥ṣṭa' over which one has no control.

There are broadly two categories into which fatalists are divided. The first are those who are primarily influenced by the chance-element in life. They think everything to be preordained. They resign themselves to their fate and as such have no interest left in the events and happenings of their lives. They prefer to accept life as it is. There are others whose concept of fate is more influenced by the theory of Karman. Whatever good or evil they get in this world is, according to them, the result of the good or bad actions performed by them in their



previous births. The good things or bad things of life do not either over-enthuse them or dishearten them much. Believing as they do in the theory of Karman they prefer to devote themselves to performing good actions in their present birth in the hope of getting good things in their next birth. They do not resign themselves to their fate for they think it within their power to change it or shape it by their actions. They have intense faith in 'Puruṣakāra.'

Since ages the Indian mind has sought to decide the superiority of 'Adṛṣṭa' and 'Puruṣakāra' over each other. There are numerous instances where one is spoken of as superior to the other. Yet this problem has never been solved. Daiva and Puruṣakāra have gone on side by side according to the individual training and make-up. A lesser man would give way when faced with unforeseen calamities. But a higher man would rise to the occasion. He would not throw up his hands in despair and sit idle. When things take place beyond his control or when events occur beyond his calculations what should a man do? Must he act as the mighty power of fate makes him to? Is he just a plaything in the hands of the invisible power? A higher man would never think of doing so. He will measure up with the difficulties, the trials and tribulations of life and would emerge cheerfully out of them. He would redouble his efforts to perform good deeds. He is the maker of his own destiny.

Both these viewpoints are to be met with in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Vālmīki has used six words to denote fate. They are : Vidhi, Kāla, Niyati, Bhavitavyatā, Daiva and Kṛtānta.

The word *Vidhi* has been explained by Vālmīki himself. Vidhi according to him is that power which makes a man act in consonance with the predetermined order :

*vidhiḥ kila naraṃ loke vidhānenānuvartate*<sup>1</sup>

In fact, the inevitability of acting as a power beyond makes a man act is contained in a greater or smaller degree in all the words that are used to denote fate in Sanskrit.

As for the exact connotation of the word 'Kāla' in the *Rāmāyaṇa* nothing definite can be said. In ordinary language it means either time or death. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* it is used as a



synonym of Daiva and is said to be the most powerful of all the forces operating in the universe. The inexorable nature of it is emphasised in a passage where Rāma, the son a king is described to have slept on the bare earth :

*na nūnam daivatam kiñcit kālena balavattaram |  
yatra dāśarathī rāmo bhūmāv evam aśeta saḥ ||<sup>2</sup>*

The words Niyati :

*niyatih kārṇam loke niyatih karmasāadhanam |  
niyatih sarvabhūtānām niyogeshviha kārṇam ||<sup>3</sup>*

and Bhavitavyatā :

*bhavitavyatayā nūnam idam vā vyasanam mahati |  
kulasyāsyā vināśāya prāptam sūta yadṛcchayā ||<sup>4</sup>*

etymologically meaning the 'definiteness' and 'wouldbeness' (*ni+ vyam+ ti* and *vbhū+ tavya+ tā*) point to the inexorableness of fate. Events in life must take place according to their predetermined order.

Next we come to the word Daiva which has been used most frequently in the *Rāmāyaṇa* to denote fate and destiny. It means the power of 'Adṛṣṭa' or the desire of the unseen power. Everything in this world moves and acts as it is made to do by the mighty hand of the invisible power :

*sumahānti api bhūtāni devās ca puruṣarṣabha |  
na daivasya pramuñcanti sarvabhūtāni dehinaḥ<sup>5</sup>*

That is the controlling authority. Man is but a plaything in its hands.

Finally we come to the word Kṛtānta which approaches nearest to the Indian concept of fate. It means the fruit of the actions done in previous births. This word, therefore, eloquently explains the close connection between the theory of Karman and Daiva. This word is very important inasmuch as it points to the time when Daiva was no longer considered to be a force which operates arbitrarily. There is definite relationship, according to this view, between the chance-occurrences and the actions in the previous births to which they can be traced. The combination of the theory of Karman takes away much of the edge from the many unhappy events and occurrences in



life. Next to Daiva Vālmīki uses the word Kṛtānta most frequently in his Rāmāyaṇa :

*aiśvārye vā suvistīrṇe vyasane vā sudūruṇe |  
rajjeva puruṣam baddhvā kṛtāntaḥ parikaṣṭi ||*<sup>6</sup>

One thing that strikes a student of the Rāmāyaṇa is that almost all the 'Rākṣasa' characters are silent with regard to fate. It seems they did not believe in it. And this is very natural too. In a culture where self stands above everything else there is no place for fate which actually means the superiority of an unseen power over everything else in this world. However, there is no total absence of reference to Daiva in the passages dealing with the 'Rākṣasas'. After the battle in Laṅkā is over some women characters blame Daiva for all the killing and destruction :

*na kāmākāraḥ kāmāṁ vā tava rākṣasapuṅgavaṇi |  
daivaṁ ceṣṭayate sarvaṁ hataṁ daivena hanyate ||*<sup>7</sup>

The concept of fate or destiny seems to be very popular among the Āryans and the non-Āryans who had come under the influence of the Āryans in the times of the Rāmāyaṇa. Although theoretically the happy moments and the pleasant events also come under fate it is remembered only at places where something wrong happens. This is not peculiar to the Rāmāyaṇa only. This is seen in every day life too. Triśaṅku, Sumantra, Daśaratha, Kausalyā, Bharata, Lakṣmaṇa, Sītā, Sampātī, Tārā and Bālī—all unhappy characters are firm believers in fate. Above all, the hero of the epic, Rāma, has intense faith in the power of fate. Though Maryādyā-puruṣottama he, strangely enough, gives himself over to the power of 'Adṛṣṭa'. This may be due to his having been called upon to bear the greatest hardships in life which all but overwhelmed him. These seem to have made him a fatalist through and through. His faith in Niyati borders on tragic fatalism. That is why he is so indifferent towards life. That in spite of all this indifference he went on doing his duty sincerely and devotedly speaks volumes for his strength of character. It is this which has made him the idol of millions of people of India.



In all the Āryan characters of the *Rāmāyaṇa* the idea of fate and destiny is deeply rooted. They seem to be in no doubt about the existence of a power called fate. There is only one character Lakṣmaṇa whose view on fate undergoes many changes as events and occurrences unfold themselves. In the beginning he has no faith in fate when Rāma decides to go to forest at the bidding of his father who is bound by a promise to Kaikeyī. Lakṣmaṇa feels hurt and in anger readily blurts out :

*yathā hy evaṃ aśauṇḍīraṃ śauṇḍīraṃ bharatarṣabhaḥ॥  
kiṃ nāma kṛpaṇaṃ daivam aśaktam abhiśaṃsasi!*<sup>8</sup>

But he has no objection to accepting the power of fate in consoling Rāma at the time of Sītā's abduction :

*āśvasiḥi naraśreṣṭha prāṇinaḥ kasya nāpadaḥ॥  
sumahānty api bhūtāni devās ca puruṣarṣabha!  
na daivasya pramuñcati sarvabhūtāni dehinaḥ॥*<sup>9</sup>

Lakṣmaṇa's faith in fate is further strengthened when he has to leave Sītā in the forest at the bidding of Rāma. Here he seems to have resigned himself to the all-powerful fate. He feels that it is inexorable :

*vyaktaṃ daivādahaṃ manye Rāghavasya vinābhavam!  
vaidedhyā sārathe nityaṃ daivam hi duratikramam॥*<sup>10</sup>

And finally when Sītā is absorbed into the earth he has to utter the same words which Rāma had said once :

*sarve kṣayāntā nicayāḥ patanāntāḥ samucchrayāḥ!  
saṃyogā viprayogāntā maraṇāntaṃ ca jīvitaṃ॥*<sup>11</sup>

Here the climax is reached. Lakṣmaṇa who had a robust faith is Puruṣakāra lies prostrate at the feet of the cruel fate. Throughout the many unhappy events of his life he has learnt to believe in the all-embracing power of fate. This, though inevitable, is unfortunate in the extreme.

Thus it would seem that Vālmiki had an intense faith in fate. But only the more hopeful aspect of it was more acceptable to him. Although at times he has had to say *pauruṣaṃ tu nirarthakam* (man's own effort is of no use) he has not attached, as it would appear from the study of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, an undue importance to this view. The behaviour of his characters has throughout been based on that concept of fate according to



which fate or destiny is nothing but the effect of the actions done in previous births. On that account alone they could endure many difficulties and hardships with a cheer that is remarkable. Words like *pauruṣam tu nirathakam* have a different meaning. The inner sense of these seems to be that man when faced with difficulties and hardships should not run about and feel overwhelmed by them. 'Pauruṣa' is this running about, going from place to place in a frantic search for anything to hold on. Such a man is advised by Vālmīki not to lose his mental balance and do all sorts of useless things when he is overpowered by difficulties. Nor should he make a fuss of them. He should endure them calmly and quietly and go on doing his duty undisturbed by many unhappy events and occurrences in his life.

## References

1. IV.56.4
2. II.88.11
3. IV.25.4.
4. I.59.20.
5. III.66.11.
6. V.37.3.
7. VI.110.23.
8. II.23.7.
9. III.66.6 and 11.
10. VII.50.4.
11. VII.106.2.



## The Concept of Fate in the Yogavāsiṣṭha

Fate and Destiny—these are the two terms that are so often heard in everyday life. Though mysterious themselves they help to clear up many a mystery of the human life. Reason and fate do not go together. When reason fails, fate steps in.

There are frequent references to *daiva* and *puruṣakāra* in the Vāsiṣṭha *Rāmāyaṇa*. In the very beginning of the work from canto V to canto X of the Mumukṣuprakaraṇa there is a fervent praise of *puruṣakāra* or human efforts. The idea of fate is presented there from a different angle. *Daiva* is *pauruṣa* itself, *pauruṣa* of earlier births. In the present life, therefore, a constant struggle is going on between the *pauruṣa* of the earlier births and the *pauruṣa* of this birth. The author of the Vāsiṣṭha *Rāmāyaṇa* compares the struggle between the two *pauruṣas* to a close neck-to-neck fight between rams. Says he:

*dvau huḍāv iva yudhyete puruṣārthau samāsamau!*

He repeats the ram-simile at least thrice in these six cantos. The author is definitely of the opinion that there is no fate. If there exists anything it is *pauruṣa* only. Just as any wrong done the other day can be rectified the following day similarly the offset of the deeds done in previous births can be effected by the good deeds done in the present birth. Out of the two *pauruṣas*, the earlier and the present, the present *pauruṣa* is more powerful and can easily conquer the earlier just as a young man can overpower a child. The author is very forthright when he says.

*Fie upon those fools who believe in destiny, although  
it is a matter of their experience that it is their own  
efforts that accomplish things for them.*

We see virtues are acquired by us if we put in efforts to read the scriptures and keep company with the good. It is pointed out further that unlike fate, *pauruṣa* is a matter of our direct



experience. *Daiva* or fate is merely a figment, a product of the imagination of the unwise. There is no such thing as fate. Whenever some one desires a thing and puts in adequate efforts for its realization he does obtain it, provided he does not stop half way because of exhaustion.<sup>2</sup> The Vāsiṣṭha *Rāmāyaṇa* very lucidly puts forth its view about *daiva* and *puruṣakāra*. It compares *daiva* with the sky ; *daivam ākāśarūpaṁ hi.....*<sup>3</sup> which is nothing, a mere void, but still is given the name *ākāśa*. *Daiva* is merely a name given to a phenomenon which really does not exist. The author of the Vāsiṣṭha *Rāmāyaṇa* does not mince matters when he declares unequivocally that fate is something substantial and active only to the unenlightened and that to the enlightened it verily does not exist :

*namu rāghava lokasya kasyacit kiñcid eva hi |*  
*daivam ākāśarūpaṁ hi karoti na karoti ca!*<sup>4</sup>

It is a fact or facts, a thought, a resolution about doing an act or an act itself done in a previous birth which offers the much-needed explanations as to why an act accomplished in this life yields good or bad results. Or fate is nothing but a word of consolation said when one is faced with the good or bad results of a present-day act and is told that they are all due to the influence of some act done in a previous birth.

*puruṣārthasya siddhasya śubhāśubhaphalodaye |*  
*idamitthaṁ sthitam iti yuktis tad daivam ucyate ||*

*iṣṭāniṣṭaphalaprapṭāṁ idam ityasya vācakam |*  
*aśvāsanāmātravaco daivam ity eva kathyate!*<sup>5</sup>

In these definitions and the other pronouncements of the Vāsiṣṭha *Rāmāyaṇa* there appears an apparent contradiction. *Daiva* or fate is the good or the bad effect of the earlier actions. If it be so, how can fate be said to be nothing or non-existing. The Vāsiṣṭha *Rāmāyaṇa* itself notices this contradiction and tries to resolve it. *Daiva*, according to it, is merely a synonym of the action done in previous births with intense resolve.

*yad eva tīvrasanivegād dṛḍhaṁ karma kṛtaṁ purā |*  
*tad eva daivaśabadena paryāयेṇeha kathyate!*<sup>6</sup>

Behind each activity there lies the *vāsanā*, the impressions of the earlier births. *Vāsanā* is nothing but the mind and the mind



is nothing but person. So when it is said that *Daiva* is action, it actually means the mind. Now the mind is non distinct from the person. Hence the conclusion that *Daiva* does not exist. The person in the form of the mind tries for this or that thing and comes to obtain it on account of his own efforts which are said to be *Daiva*. And so it is the definite mental resolve of a person which is at the back of all activity. The advice of the *Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa*, therefore, is that one should engage oneself in good activities, for that will surely off-set the evil effect of bad deeds done in previous births. But here it must be remembered that the individual effort in the present must be powerful enough to contend adequately with the effort put forth in earlier births. Otherwise it is possible that the present effort may be thwarted and may just remain devoid of any fruit. Just as food is crushed by the teeth when it is put under them, similarly if one of the two, the *daiva* and the *puruṣārthas*, is more powerful than the other, it can destroy the other. *Daiva* or destiny is nothing else than one's own actions in previous births, the view enunciated by the *Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa* in a number of places. The *Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa* clearly propounds the principle that of the two *puruṣārthas*, one of this birth and the other of previous births, whichever is more powerful wins and overpowers the other : *jayaty atibalas tayoh*.<sup>7</sup> The *Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa* further advises that if, one's efforts directed to the achievement of a desired object come to naught, one should console oneself by this feeling alone that the efforts were too feeble to lead to the desired results. It may also be possible that occasionally proper efforts too may not yield proper results. But that should not dissuade a person from putting in more and more strenuous efforts. In any case whether one's efforts succeed or not one should not feel aggrieved. All the objects of the world thrive on such factors as time, space, action and substances. If in one set of circumstances one's efforts do not succeed, it is just possible that in another, they may. Under these conditions it will be simply unwise to feel sorry for one's wasted efforts. What is required is that one should have recourse to *pauruṣa*, join the company of the good, read the *śāstras* and cross the ocean of this *samsāra* by purging one's mind of all



impurities by conscious and sustained efforts. As and as one's efforts would go on multiplying, the results would begin to appear quicker and quicker. In the ultimate analysis it is an individual effort alone that is real. It is that alone which is termed fate. Just as a person stricken with sorrow cries out *hā kaṣṭam*, how sad, similarly does he exclaim, *hā daivam*, oh fate.<sup>8</sup> The expression *hā kaṣṭam*, and *hā daivam* are synonyms. By *hā kaṣṭam*, one means the painful results of one's actions. This is precisely the meaning of *hā daivam*, too. From this it will be clear, as has been remarked earlier, that fate or *daiva* is nothing else than one's own previous actions. It is nothing different from them. It has no independent existence, no separate entity which the ignorant alone assume for it. If one's efforts go waste, it may be due to the comparatively increased forcefulness or effectiveness of *daiva*, viz., one's own actions performed earlier. But then there is all the more reason that the present effort should be intensified so as to become more forceful than the action performed earlier. Those who assume fate or destiny as an independent force at work to frustrate one's present efforts do not grasp its reality and consequently do not put forth effort to conquer it. They must be pronounced as wretched fools deserving of pity. They think that whatever is seen by them, experienced by them or done by them, is all due to fate. They are really perverted minds. By ascribing things directly seen or experienced by them to an outside agency called destiny they land themselves nowhere. What is required is that one may give oneself over to efforts with a singleness of purpose. Such efforts alone, when regulated by śāstraic injunctions, can deliver the goods. The *Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa* clearly declares:

*arthaprāpakakāryaikaprayatnaparatā budhaiḥ |*  
*proktā pauraśābdena..... ||<sup>9</sup>*

What is *pauraṣa* according to the *Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa*? The definition as given above is *arthaprāpakakāryaikaprayatnaparatā*.<sup>10</sup> But the efforts should not be absolute, but should be put forward, the *Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa* clearly points out, within the framework of the śāstraic injunctions, the checks and balances put down by the *sāstras* (*śāstrayantrīṭā*), lest the consequences be disastrous. It is necessary that efforts made are noble,



are for good and not for evil. That is the refrain in the *Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa*. Its author is never tired of enjoining proper efforts which should yield good results. His entire approach is characterized by ideal of Dharma. The good efforts would yield good results which would banish sorrow and suffering which are necessarily the result of misdeeds done previously, and that is precisely the aim which the author has in view.

Not only is it in the beginning of the work, but elsewhere also that we find that the individual effort is extolled while that goes by the name of fate or destiny is denounced to the point of its being called non-existent and its equation with *pauruṣa* itself. So in the balance what remains is *pauruṣa* only. Elsewhere, too, in the *Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa* we meet with many passages which echo the same idea. Thus in IV. 32 we come across the verse:

*paramaṁ pauruṣaṁ yatnam āsthāyādāya sūdyamaṁ |  
yathāśāstram anudvegam ācaran ko na siddhibhākī |*<sup>1</sup>

“Who is there who cannot achieve his ultimate goal by putting in supreme efforts according to the *śāstras* without any feeling of fear” ?

Further in IV. 62 the author comes out very forcefully in support of *pauruṣa*. Among the many verses found there is one that deserves quotation here for it spells out the author’s belief which in all probability is born of inner conviction. The verse in question reads:

*na tad asti pṛthivyām vā divi deveṣu vā kvacit |  
pauruṣeṇa prayatnena yan nāpnoti guṇānvitah |*<sup>2</sup>

“There is no such thing on the earth, in the heaven, and among the gods and elsewhere which a person endowed with qualities cannot attain by individual efforts.”

There can be no more forthright enunciation of the importance of *pauruṣa* and its implied superiority over *daiva*. In V. 13. 8. too, the fatalists are denounced in no uncertain terms while *puruṣakāra* is praised. The verse reads:

*na daivam na ca karmāṇi na dhanāni na bāndhavāḥ |  
saraṇaṁ bhavabhītānāṁ svaprayatnād ṛte nṛṇām |*<sup>3</sup>



"Apart from one's own efforts nothing can save the people who are afraid of this world; not even fate, actions (mere physical movements), wealth or relations."

In V. 24 too, a lengthy discussion about *daiva* and *puruṣakāra* is introduced in the *Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa*. There too, the superiority of *puruṣakāra* over *daiva* is enunciated in clearest possible terms. The reason for so much of emphasis that the *Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa* puts on *puruṣakāra* can be traced to its philosophy. The central theme of the *Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa* philosophy is *saṅkalpakalanā* of the *citta*. The moment the *citta*, is deadened (rendered absolutely inactive) by various methods (*yuktis*) which are detailed in different parts of the work and constant practice (*abhyāsa*), the world outside ceases to exist. There is no happiness or sorrow then. And that is the state of salvation (*mokṣa*) which is the ultimate goal. The work in V. 92 (verses 27—33) describes the various stages in the conquest of the *citta*. First, the stopping of breath (*prāṇarodhana*) by means of *prāṇāyāma*, continued practice (*cirābhyāsa*), the way shown by the guru (*yuktyā ca gurudattayā*) and the control exercised on sitting and eating (*aśanāsanayogena*) and then the appearance of the true knowledge (*jñāna*) by which one comes to know the real form of a thing as it obtained in the beginning and as it stood at the end, which results in the disappearance of the *vāsanā* and ultimately leads to that state when the *citta* becomes extinct, just as the dust remains still in the sky when there is no movement in the air. What is actually the movement of the breath is the movement of the *citta*. A wise man should try his utmost to achieve a conquest of *prāṇaspanda*, the movement of the breath, by concentration. Or one may directly put the *citta* under control and not follow the above-mentioned sequence of various practices. It requires constant practice spread over a long period. However, whichever way the conquest of the mind is sought to be achieved, one thing that can definitely be said about it is that the mind can never be conquered without the proper devices (*yuktis*) and these devices may be listed as :

*adhyātmavidyādhigamaḥ sādhusaṅgama eva ca |*  
*vāsanāsaṃparityāgaḥ prāṇaspandanirodhanam ||*



*etās tā yuktayaḥ puṣṭāḥ santi cittajaye kilai  
yābhis taj jīyate kṣipram.....*<sup>14</sup>

“ Attainment of spiritual knowledge, association with the god people, giving up of the *vāsanā*, the stopping of the movement of breath; these are said to be the devices effective for the conquest of the *citta*. The disappearance of the *vāsanā* (*vāsanākṣaya*) leads to the extinction of the *citta* (*cittanāśa*) and vice versa. These two again lead to *tattvajñāna* which may again be said to be the cause of these two. These three, the *tattvajñāna*, the attainment of true knowledge, the *manonāśa*, the extinction of the mind and the *vāsanākṣaya*, the disappearance of the *vāsanā* are, therefore, each the cause and the effect of the other and are difficult of accomplishment as the *Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa* says :

*tattvajñānam manonāśo vāsanākṣaya eva ca  
mithaḥ kāraṇatām gatvā duḥśādhyaṇi sthīlāni ataḥ*<sup>15</sup>

What is required, therefore, is conscious effort ; *tasmād rāghava yatnena pauruṣeṇa vivekinā.....trayam etat samāśrayet*.<sup>16</sup> As a matter of fact, the achievement of *vāsanā-samparityāga*, the giving up of the *vāsanā*, which is at once the cause and the effect of the *manonāśa*, the extinction of the mind, is very difficult, more difficult perhaps than even the uprooting of the Mount Meru ; *duḥśādhyo vāsanātyāgaḥ sumerūnmūlanād api*<sup>17</sup> but there is no reason why it should not be attempted. By constant *abhyāsa*, practice, and the various devices detailed above conscious efforts are to be put forth to achieve the disappearance of the *vāsanā* (*vāsanākṣaya*), the extinction of the mind (*manonāśa*) and the ultimate knowledge (*tattvajñāna*). Here then comes the need for *puruṣakāra*, the conscious effort. Hence there is so much of emphasis on it in the *Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa* whose author is never tired of repeating the value of *puruṣakāra* and bringing out its importance even at the risk of being repetitive. For his pet theory is ‘just as you think and do so will it take shape.’ So in the ultimate analysis what remains of this world is one’s own *saṅkalpa*, one’s own *puruṣārtha*:

*puruṣārthād ṛte putra na kiñcid iha vidyate*<sup>18</sup>



If that *puruṣārtha* is directed properly and with discrimination, it may well lead to the disappearance of the *vāsanā* (*vāsanākṣaya*), the extinction of the mind (*manonāśa*) and the dawn of the true knowledge (*tattvajñāna*). Now, if one more entity, the *daiva* is postulated here it will then be a clear reversal of the philosophy preached by the *Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa*. For the author of the *Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa* there is no *daiva*. In one of his many forthright utterances he says that one should put in one's efforts and leave the fate far behind :

*pauruṣam yatnam āśritya daivam kṛtvā sudūrataḥ |  
bhogān vigarhayet prājñāḥ....*<sup>19</sup>

There is talk of *daiva* (fate) among the ordinary folk but it (fate) is nothing concrete, nothing corporeal :

*daivam ity ucyate loke na daivam dehavat kvacit* <sup>20</sup>

In V. 24. the *Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa* mentions a number of words for fate like *daiva*, *bhavitavyatā* (*avaśyambhavitavya*) and *niyati* and attempts an interesting interpretation of them to fit in well with its philosophy. The *Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa*'s interpretation of *niyati*, for example, is :

*kartā no mana eveha yet kalpayati tat tathā ||  
niyatim yādṛsim etat saṅkalpayati tat tathā |  
niyatāniyatān kāñścid arthān aniyatan api ||  
karoti cittam tenaitac cittam niyatiyojakam |  
niyatyām niyatim kurvan kadācit svārthanāmikām ||  
sphuraty asmin jagatkoṣe jīvo vyomnūva mārutaḥ |  
niyatyā vihitam kurvan kadācin niyatimcaraḥ ||  
sañjñārtham rudhaniyatiśabdaḥ sphurati sānuvat  
tasmād yan manas tāvan na daivam niyatir na ca* <sup>21</sup>

"For us it is here the mind which is an agent. Just as it conceives things, so do they take shape. The way it thinks of the *niyati* so does it become. It is the mind which creates things of our experience (the empirical world) which ordinarily yield fruit but in exceptional circumstances may not, and things which are illusory only and have no invariability of effects. Hence it is the mind that is responsible for the *niyati*. In this way when an object is real it must have fruit invariably and hence no



variability of fruit which we have in the case of *daiva* or *karma*. Sometimes the individual soul (*jīva*) called the *citta* (mind) in a birth fit for emancipation has its *niyati*, the *nirvikalpa-samādhī*,<sup>22</sup> or *niyati*, the supreme self which is ever immutable. In that state like the air in the sky it continues to exist in its real state free from all association and attachment. But when on leaving *śāstraic* injunctions, it occupies itself with activities suitable for various stages of life for the purpose of instructing the ignorant then the word *niyati* comes to be popularly used for it. It begins to behave like the peak of a mountain which appears to be moving when the leaves on the trees growing on it are shaken by the wind, and appears still when the wind does not blow. Hence the conclusion that so long as there is the mind there is no *daiva* or *niyati* or fate or destiny. The reason for this is that it is the individual self which assumes the form of a human being and whatever it conceives, is becomes. Fate or destiny or *daiva* or *niyati*, as the two words are understood popularly, simply does not exist. From the above dissertation it follows that *samkalpa* being *jīva*'s (or *citta*'s) own doing independent of outside help, one ought to acquire by self-effort such means as *vairāgya* to conceive oneness with Brahman and not conceive oneself as *samsārin*.

The above discussion helps us grasp properly the various senses in which the word *niyati* has been used in the *Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa*. In the text quoted above at one place it means the supreme self (*paramātmā*), at another it means the *nirvikalpa-samādhī* (the exclusive concentration) where all forms of consciousness of the known etc. disappear, and at still another it means the *śāstraic* injunctions. The etymology of the word *niyati* is probably at the back of all these different meanings in which it has been used in the text. Etymologically *niyati* means control (*ni+yam+ti*) or the invariableness. *Niyati* is called the supreme self because it is invariable, it is always found in its one state of sameness. *Nirvikalpakasamādhī* is called *niyati*, for here too there is the sameness, all cognition having vanished.<sup>24</sup> The *śāstraic* injunctions are called *niyati* for they control (regulate) the life of an individual. To attempt a connection between these seemingly different meanings of the word *niyati*,



we may say that it is the *citta* or the individual self which when in a state of *nirvikalpakasamādhi*, as when it is emancipated is identical with, and has its existence in the supreme soul (*paramātman*) who is changeless or *niyati* or is *niyati* changelessness itself. It engages itself in different activities enjoined by the *śāstras* when it bestirs itself. It is the activated state of the mind or the individual soul only which is called *niyati* popularly. *Niyati* actually is *phalaniyati*, the regularity about the effect.<sup>25</sup> The various *saṁkalpas* have the various effects invariably. It is, therefore, the *saṁkalpas* which control the effects. Now these *saṁkalpas* arise in the mind. So it is the mind which really controls the effects of the *saṁkalpas* or the *niyati* or the invariable nature of the effects. When no *saṁkalpas* arise in the mind, there is no *niyati* which is in the form of the direct perception of the internal reality (*pratyakparamārthagocarasākṣātkārarūpa*), the state of equilibrium called the 'nirvikalpakasamādhi' but this *niyati* is different from the *phalaniyati* which has its appearance only when the mind bestirs itself (*vyutthānakāle*). When the mind or the *citta* becomes active it begins to weave different patterns and draw different images. It is these images, good or bad, which yield good or bad effects. As these images are the creations of the mind, it is the mind which is real and not these images which owe their existence to it (mind). When the mind is brought under control, the various *saṁkalpas* of the mind which give rise to 'phalaniyati' too are brought under control. So it is that the *Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa* enjoins supreme efforts for the control of the mind or the *citta*. Hence the value of *puruṣakāra* in its philosophy.

It is perfectly in accord with this philosophy of *puruṣakāra* that at another place, too, the *Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa* points out that all aims and objects which ordinarily appear impossible of attainment are obtained by means of *adhyavasāya*, conscious effort: *sarvam adhyavasāyena duṣprāpam api labhyate*.<sup>26</sup> In V. 57 the verses 37-38 extol *puruṣakāra* and present it as essential for the achievement of even the most difficult things.

In V.61, however, the word *niyati* is used in an altogether different sense, viz., the desire of the Supreme Lord. We have the verse there:



*tatthitāsv atidīrghāsu daśāsv anyatvam āgataḥ |  
bhūyo vāyam api śliṣṭāś citro hi niyater vidhiḥ ||<sup>27</sup>*

“So having separated from each other for all these long periods we have come together. The way of *niyati* (*īśvarechhā*) is strange indeed”.

That the use of *niyati* is here in the sense of *īśvarechhā*, the desire of *īśvara*, may be seen from another verse occurring in that very canto wherein *niyati* is qualified by the word *daivikī* thereby meaning the *daivikī* *niyati* or the desire of the *deva* or *īśvara*. The verse in question reads :

*bhagavan niyater asyāḥ gatim sarpagater iva |  
daivikyāḥ ko hi jānāti gambhīrām vismayapradām ||<sup>28</sup>*

“My Lord who knows the way of *niyati*, the playful desire of the Supreme Being (*deva*) which is mysterious as the movement of a serpent and which is wonderful.”

It is the *īśvarcchārūpavidhi* or *niyati* which is of course conditioned by one's actions, good or bad, which is spoken of here as well as elsewhere in the *Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa* as very powerful, as for example, in *kim asādhyam aho vidheḥ*. Now, it may be observed that here *īśvara* does not signify God as we use the word in ordinary parlance. The word means the internal self (*pratyakcetana ātman*). The words *vidhi*, *daiva* and *niyati* too which ordinarily mean destiny or fate mean here the internal self only. In support of it, we may quote the following verse from the *Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa* :

*vidhir daivm vidhir dhātā sarveṣaḥ śiva īśvaraḥ |  
iti nāmabhir ātmā naḥ pratyakcetana ucyate ||<sup>29</sup>*

“Our internal self is called by various names like *vidhi*, *daiva*, *dhātṛ*, *sarveṣa*, *śiva* and *īśvara*.”

*Vidhi* or *niyati* in other words, therefore, would mean the internal self or the *jīvātman*, not in its absolute state but in its state of activity (*vyutthāna*) when it performs good or bad actions and can have any *samkalpa* and in this way is capable of achieving the most impossible things. It is for this *vidhi* or *niyati* in its state of *vyutthāna* that it is said in the *Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa* that it is such a thing for which there is nothing difficult of achievement. That is why the *niyati*, the set course, (here the



word *niyati* has been used not in the sense noted above, viz., *pratyakcetana ātman*, the internal self, is said to be strange and is said to be slow-moving on account of its endless exertions.

As this *pratyakcetana ātman*, or the internal self is capable of endless *saṁkalpas* (*anantārambha*) so it is that conscious-efforts are enjoined in the Vāsiṣṭha *Rāmāyaṇa* to keep it under control. These efforts are the *pauruṣa*, which is very much essential for achieving any thing. Without it nothing can be achieved or as the Vāsiṣṭha *Rāmāyaṇa* says :

*pauruṣeṇa na yat prāptam na tat kvacana labhyate*<sup>30</sup>

Under this circumstances, the advice of the *Vogavāsishtha* is :

*daivaikaparatām tyaktvā bālābodhopakalpitām ||  
nijaṁ prayatnam āśritya cittam ādau nirodhayet* <sup>31</sup>

“One should give up one’s sole dependence on fate which is an entity assumed for the purpose of instructing the ignorant. One should have recourse to one’s own efforts and first control the mind.”

More explicit is the following statement :

*prāktanī vāsanādyāpi pauruṣeṇāvañīyate |  
hyaḥ kukarmādyā yatnena prayāti hi sukarṁatām* <sup>32</sup>

“Even to-day the earlier *vāsanās*, the impressions left on the mind by earlier actions, good or bad, which are responsible for all feelings of pleasure or pain can be conquered by present efforts. A bad deed done yesterday can be converted into a good one by *pauruṣa* or *yatna*, the present effort.

Further in VI(i).14 it is said that this is the decision of *niyati*: *niyater eṣa niścayaḥ* and further, *durlaṅghya eṣa niyater vilāsaḥ*, “that the way of *niyati* is the pre-determined and cannot be transgressed.” *Niyati* here is pre-determined course of event conditioned by good or bad actions performed by an individual in earlier births.

## References

- 1.
2. *avaśyaṁ tad avāpnoti na cec cchrānto nivartate*



3. II. 9.7
4. *ibid.*
5. II. 9.8 & 10.
6. II. 9.16
7. II.5.7.
8. II. 6. 3.
9. II. 7. 24.
10. II.7. 24; II. 6. 32.
11. IV. 62. 18-19.
12. V. 13.8.
13. V. 92. 35-37.
14. V. 92.14.
15. V. 92.15.
- 17.V. 92.10.
18. V. 24.36.
19. V. 24.60.
20. V. 24.26.
21. V. 24.30-34.
- 22.
23. The exclusive concentration without the consciousness of the knower or the known or even without self-consciousness and where there is perfect equilibrium.
24. Yet not a trance or a stupor or senselessness.
25. since a given cause must produce an effect.
26. V. 47. 38.
27. V. 61. 42.
28. V. 61. 43.
29. V. 75. 35.
30. VI.(i) 29. 9.
31. VI.(i) 29. 9-10.
32. VI. (i) 51. 47.



## The Concept of Fate in Kālidāsa

A careful perusal of the works of Kālidāsa shows his strong belief in fate. There is so frequent a mention of it in his works and so many incidents are ascribed to its working that it is impossible to conceive of him not believing in its all-powerful role. भवितव्यता, भाग्य, भागधेय, विधि, दैव, नियति, कृतान्त are some of the words by which he designates it. In the *Vikramorvaśīya* when one of Bharata's pupils says that during a performance Urvaśī in the role of Lakṣmī on being asked as to whom among Keśava and the Lokapālas she is attached, she, through slip of tongue utters the word Purūravas instead of Puruṣottama (Keśava), the other pupil remarks : भवितव्यानुविधायीनीन्द्रियाणि,<sup>1</sup> the senses proceed according to what is destined. There is reference to fate again in the same play under the different word दैव in the context of the King's union with his son and his imminent separation from Urvaśī : अहो सुखप्रत्यार्थिता दैवस्य<sup>2</sup>, Oh : the opposition of fate to happiness (due to the condition imposed by Indra on the latter having been cursed by Bharata for her slip of tongue in pronouncing the word Purūravas in place of Puruṣottama that she could be with Purūravas only till she sees her son's face).

In the *Mālavikāgnimitra* Irāvati, the queen of Agnimitra is seen to be cross with him to find him with Mālavika. She leaves in a huff in disregard of his entreaties. She softens later and comes to meet him to find the same scene back again. To notice her feelings ruffled the jester tells her that the king had forgotten the impropriety of ignoring his efforts to placate her but that has not reconciled her. The king also tells her that her anger is improper which does not befit her. With a pungent irony Irāvati remarks that the king has rightly said 'improper'. She refers to the king's love for her as her luck and says that with that transferred to some one else, if she were to feel angry, she would look ridiculous : अन्यसङ्क्रान्तेषु अस्माकं भागधेयेषु यदि पुनः कुप्येयं ततो हास्या



भवेयम्।<sup>3</sup>

Fate is referred to again in the work in the context of the blossoming of the Aśoka tree with the stroke of Mālavikā's foot. Its female garden keeper mentions this with the feeling that the event would please the Chief Queen who through jealousy had otherwise been very hard to her : अहो! दैवस्यानुकम्पनीया मालविका, 'Oh, Fate has taken pity on Mālavikā'.<sup>4</sup> Fate still again is an object of reference in the work when at the query of the king on learning from the two artist maids sent as present from the Vidarbha country that Mālavikā is the younger sister of Prince Mādhavasena who had been released from confinement after defeating the Vidarbha ruler, as to how she had come to such a pass : अथात्रभवती कथमित्यम्भूता?<sup>5</sup> she says to herself (आत्मगतम्) विधिनियोगेन<sup>6</sup>, through a play of fate. Kauśiki's referring to herself as मन्दभाग्या<sup>7</sup>, unfortunate, also underlines the play of fate in shaping of events, which she proceeds to narrate from where the maids had finished : अतः परमहं मन्दभाग्यां कथयिष्यामि।

In the *Abhijñānaśākuntala* fate is referred to a number of times. There is reference to it in the very beginning of the work itself. When Duṣyanta in pursuit of a deer in a forest enters a hermitage, he notices the throbbing in the arms, an indication of something good coming which he is not able to make out that time. He then says :

शान्तमिदमाश्रमपदं स्फुरति च बाहुः कुतः फलमिहास्य।

अथवा भवतिव्यानां द्वाराणि भवन्ति सर्वत्र।<sup>8</sup>

there are openings every where for what are predestined. Fate is referred to again when a hermit informs Duṣyanta at the latter's query whether Kaṇva is in the hermitage that he (Kaṇva) has gone to Somatīrtha for appeasing the adverse fate of Śakuntalā entrusting her with the duty of honouring guests : शकुन्तलामतिथिसत्काराय नियुज्य दैवमस्याः प्रतिकूलं शमयितुं सोमतीर्थं गतः<sup>9</sup>, Kaṇva while delivering a message for Duṣyanta at Śakuntalā's departure for his capital also refers to it. He tells him to treat her the same way as he treats his other wives keeping him in mind as also his noble lineage and his love for her. He need not add anything more to it, says he (Kaṇva) for, beyond this everything depends upon fate : भाग्यायत्तमतः परम्<sup>10</sup>, meaning thereby



that it is fate alone which is to determine how, inspite of all this, things are to turn out. The next time fate is referred to is when Śakuntalā having been repudiated by Duṣyanta finds fault with it : सा निन्दन्ती स्वानि भाग्यानि बाला<sup>11</sup>

The nymph Sānumatī keeping an invisible watch over the actions of Duṣyanta makes a reference to it when she hears remorseful Duṣyanta say after the discovery of the ring that his heart which remained asleep even after it was being awakened by Śakuntalā was now broad awake to suffer the agony of remorse, नन्वी दृशानि तपस्विन्या भागधेयानि<sup>12</sup>, such is the lot of the poor (creature). Fate is referred to again when in the jasmine grove, Mādhavīmaṇḍapa, at the king's query to the jester as to whether he, like him, too had forgotten about Śankuntalā not having mentioned her name any time, the jester replies : far from it. After telling him everything about his affair with her, he (the king) had told him finally that it was only a joke and not a fact and that he, the dullard (मृत्पिण्डबुद्धि), had taken it as such. As a post-cript to the above the jester adds : अथवा भवितव्यता खल्वत्र बलवतो<sup>13</sup>, or what is destined is indeed here inexorable.' As the jester and the king continue, the former asks the latter as to what for he had placed the ring in Śankuntalā's hand, the latter says that he had done so at the time of his departure from the hermitage for his capital to tell her to count the days as per the number of syllables in the name inscribed on it. By the time she would come upon the last of it, a person would appear to escort her to his harem which out of infatuation he did not do. The nymph Sānumatī listening invisibly to the above refers to fate and ascribes to it the frustration of the aforesaid arrangement : रमणीयः खल्ववधिर्धिना विसंवादितः<sup>14</sup>

The next reference to fate is when Śankuntalā talking to herself in Mārica's Āśrama after hearing the news of the herb retaining its natural form and not undergoing a metamorphosis (which it would if touched by one other than parents and ones own self) even after being lifted up by Duṣyanta; says : विकारकालेऽपि प्रकृतिस्थां सर्वदमनस्यौषधिं श्रुत्वा न मे आशाऽऽसीदात्मनो भागधेयेषु<sup>15</sup>, "even though I heard that Sarvadamana's herb remained in its natural form even at the time of matamorphosis, I had no hope about my fortune. She further refers to it when she most



unexpectedly, comes face to face with Duṣyanta : परित्यक्तमत्सरेणानुकम्पिताऽस्मि दैवेन<sup>16</sup>, 'the fate has shown mercy to me'. Fate is referred to next when at Bharata's query to Śāṅkuntalā as to who the stranger—he does not know that he is his father Duṣyanta who had earlier lifted him up and is now engaged in conversation with his mother, is, Śāṅkuntalā says : वत्स ते भागधेयानि पृच्छ<sup>17</sup>, child, ask your luck. That was to be the fate of the young one that he was to enquire about his own father as to who he is. And this is the last time that there is reference to fate in the play.

Fate is referred to in Kālidāsa's works not only by any of its well known names but also by the good or the bad result of the actions in the previous births. This is what is done in the context of Sitā's exile in the *Raghuvamśa* where Sitā ascribes her repudiation to the sin of her previous births: ममैव जन्मान्तरपातकानां विपाकविरम्फुर्जुर्धुरप्रसज्यः।<sup>18</sup> Śāṅkuntalā also does the same when she, noticing Duṣyanta penitent at what he had done to her, remarks : नूनं मे सुचरितप्रतिबन्धकं पुराकृतं तेषु दिवेषु परिणामाभिमुखमासीद्येन सानुक्रोशोऽप्यार्यपुत्रो मयि तथाविधः संवृत्त<sup>19</sup>, indeed in those days a bad deed done earlier (in earlier births) was beginning to show result in that my husband even though kind to me had turned to be so.

While treating Kālikāsa's belief in fate, it will not be out of point to say a word about his use of the words for the same. It is interesting to note his use of the words भाग्य and भागधेय in plural : अन्यसङ्क्रान्तहृदयेष्वस्माकं भागधेयेषु<sup>20</sup>, सा निन्दन्तो स्वानि भाग्यानि बाला<sup>21</sup>, नन्वौद्शानि तपस्विन्या भागधेयानि<sup>22</sup>, न मे आशाऽऽसीदात्मनो भागधेयेषु<sup>23</sup>, वत्स ते भागधेयानि पृच्छ<sup>24</sup>. Fate is always singular, nowhere is it fates. Why then भाग्यानि and not भाग्यम् or भागधेयानि and not भागधेयम्? Probable it is that the plural here refers to the series of fateful incidents that have led to the unhappy consummation. The plural in भाग्यानि in सा निन्दन्ती स्वानि भाग्यानि बाला suggests the different vicissitudes of Śāṅkuntalā's life.<sup>25</sup> Her falling in love with a stranger (*ājñātāhrdaya*), his mind unknown, the slipping of her ring in Somatīrtha, her repudiation by Duṣyanta and her mortification at that. The plural in भागधेयानि in ईद्शानि तपस्विन्या भागधेयानि refers to the chance turn of events : Durvāsas's curse, the loss of the signet ring by which the king's heart even though awakened



again and again remained asleep and its accidental discovery.<sup>26</sup> The same in वत्स ते भागधेयानि पृच्छ refers to the strange turn of events that have led to the present consummation in father and the son not knowing each other and may also shape things one way or the other. भागधेयानि suggests everything : Bharata's birth after his mother's repudiation, his upbringing, even though a prince, in a hermitage in the company of hermits and the wild beings as also the possibilities, as explained by Kale, one, of Bharata being accepted as his son by the king and his becoming an emperor one day, and the other, of his spending his whole life in a hermitage.<sup>27</sup>

An explanation along the same line could well be possible for the plural in भागधेयेषु both in अन्यसङ्क्रान्तहृदयेष्वस्माकं भागधेयेषु,<sup>28</sup> of the *Mālavikāgnimitra* and न म आशसीदात्मनो भागधेयेषु<sup>29</sup>, of the *Abhijñānaśākuntala*. A far better explanation for plural in all the cases cited above could well be that it refers to the actions, good or bad, of the previous births which result in fruits, good or bad, in the present one. These action when taken severally need plural for expression; when taken collectively need singular : भाग्यम्, दैवम्, विधिः, कृतान्तः, etc. Hence the use of both by Kālidāsa. Though plausible, both the explanations leave the question of the exclusive use of plural in भागधेय by Kālidāsa unanswered. Could it be due just to current usage?

As for the poem of Kālidāsa, there is no mention of fate in the *Rtusamhāra*. In the *Meghadūta*, however, there is reference to it in four places. In the very beginning of the work the Yakṣa refers to his mendicancy before cloud on account of his separation from his dear one due to (adverse) fate : तेनार्थित्वं त्वयि विधिवशाद् दूरबन्धुगतोऽहम्.<sup>30</sup> Later while telling the cloud about the likely condition of his consort in his absence he (the Yakṣa) again refers to fate due to which her thigh has to do without the wonted net of pearls : मुक्ताजालं चिरपरिचितं त्याजितो दैवगत्या<sup>31</sup>, Still later in the message to the cloud he makes mention of the adverse fate blocking his way in making him unite, through the imaginative faculty, his body with that of his beloved : अङ्गोनाङ्गं ... सङ्कल्पैस्तैर्विशति विधिना वैरिणा रूढमार्गः.<sup>32</sup>

Further on he ascribes to fate absence of union with the



beloved even in dream by robbing him of the sight by ever-increasing torrent of tears:

अस्त्रैस्तावन्मुहुरुपचितैर्दृष्टिरालुप्यते मे  
क्रूरस्तस्मिन्नपि न सहते सङ्गमं नौ कृतान्तः॥<sup>32</sup>

The *Raghuvamśa* mentions fate in half a dozen places, first time in the context of the chance development of friendship between Priyamvada, a Gandharva Prince, rescued by an accidental shot of an arrow from elephanthood imposed upon him by sage Mataṅga and Raghu, the scion of the Ikṣvākus on the way to Indumatī's Svayamvara :

एवं तयोरध्वनि दैवयोगादासेदुषोः सख्यमचिन्त्यहेतु<sup>33</sup>

The next mention of fate is in the context of the comparison of Indumatī's turning away from the Kalinga ruler, though tempted by Sunandā, as does the goddess of fortune from an unfortunate fellow though brought from a distance by him through exertion :

तस्मादपावतत दूरकृष्या नीत्येव लक्ष्मीः प्रतिकूलदैवात्<sup>34</sup>

Aja in his lamentations as the death of Indumatī refers to fate three times. He is not able to make out as to how even flowers, the most delicate of the things, could take away the life of a person. If they even can do so, argues he, what other things could not be enough for fate, if only it is to strike :

कुसुमान्यपि गात्रसङ्गमात्प्रभवन्त्यायुरपोहितुं यदि।  
न भविष्यति हन्त साधनं किमिवान्यत् प्रहरिष्यतो विधेः॥<sup>35</sup>

He thinks that it is due to his adverse fate that the creator turned the garland into thunderbolt :

अथवा मम भाग्यविप्लवादशनिः कल्पित एष वेधसा<sup>37</sup>

He blames his own deeds, what actually fate is, for what has befallen him :

सहतां हतजीवितं मम प्रबलामात्मकृतेन वेदनाम्॥<sup>38</sup>

The next and the last reference to fate in the work is when, after Sītā is carried to the nether world by the earth and the agitated Rāma takes up his bow to get her back from her (the earth), Vālmiki and Vasiṣṭha pacify him by letting him of the inexorableness of the working of fate :



गुरुर्विधिबलापेक्षी शमयामास धन्विनः<sup>39</sup>

Fate finds mention in the first eight cantos of the *Kumār-asambhava*, generally accepted to be genuine, in at least four places : out of which three pertain to Rati after the burning of Kāma. In the earliest of these fate is said to be wishing to make Rati regain consciousness with a desire to making her experience new widowhood with its unbearable pangs :

अथ मोहपरायणा सती विवशा कामवधूर्विवाधिता।

विधिना प्रतिपादयिष्यता नववैधव्यमसह्यवेदनम्।<sup>40</sup>

Rati on regaining herself indulges in the moot pathetic lamentations. She accuses fate to have cheated the world : विधिना जन एष वञ्चितः<sup>41</sup>, it is on Kāma that the happiness of the people depends : त्वदधीनं खलू देहिनां सुखम्.<sup>42</sup> While addressing Vasanta, the friend of her husband, she charges fate with committing half the butchery in killing Kāma while sparing her : विधिना कृतमर्घवेशसं ननु मां कामवधे विमुञ्चता.<sup>43</sup>

The fourth reference to fate is in the context of drinking of wine offered by the presiding deity of the Gandhamādana forest by Pārvasī and undergoing a change thereby which though a change was attractive like the common mango tree changing into the Sahakāra kind due to the inscrutable working of fate :

अप्रतर्क्यविधियोगकारितामाप्नोतेव सहकारतां ययौ.<sup>44</sup>

With so much of prominence of fate in Kālidāsa's works one is tempted to ask the question : Was Kālidāsa a fatalist? Did he believe that everything was predestined, determined by actions, good or bad in previous births? Did he believe in independence of action in any form in the present birth? It is difficult to answer this question with a degree of precision. Kālidāsa does seem to believe in independent action to a point after which he appears to resign himself to fate. This seems to come out of the message of Kaṇva for Duṣyanta. He first asks the latter to do this or to do that. Soon thereafter he leaves everything to fate : भाग्यायत्तमतः परम्। Man can go in shaping things to a certain extent only beyond which he has no control over them and has to follow the path charted out for him Destiny.



**Note**

The following editions of Kālidāsa's have been used in this article

- i. *Vikramorvaṣīya*, (*Vikra*) ed. Shankar Pandurang Pandit, Sanskrit Series No. XVI, Bombay, 1901.
- ii. *Mālavikāgnimitra* (*Mal.*) ed. M.R. Kale, The Standard Publishing Co., Bombay, 1918.
- iii. *Abhijñānaśākuntala* (*Abh. Śā*) ed. M.R. Kale, Gopal Narayan & co., Bombay, 1920.
- iv. *Raghuvamśa* (*Ragh.*) Nirnaya Sagar Press, Bombay, 1920.
- v. *Kumārasambhava* (*Ku. Sam.*) ed. M.R. Kale, Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi, 1981.
- vi. *Meghadūta* (*Megh.*) ed. M.R. Kale, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1974.

**References**

1. *Vikra.*, Act III. p. 71.
2. *ibid.*, Act V, p. 161.
3. *Mal.*, Act IV, p. 85.
4. *ibid.*, Act V, p. 89.
5. *ibid.*, p. 89.
6. *ibid.*
7. *ibid.*
8. *Abh. Śa.*, Act I, p. 15.
9. *ibid.*,
10. *ibid.*, p. 17.
11. *ibid.*, Act V, 30.
12. *ibid.*, Act VI, p. 150.
13. *ibid.*, Act VI, p. 152.
14. *ibid.*, p. 156.
15. *ibid.*, Act VII, p. 192.
16. *Abh. Sa.*, p. 193.
17. *ibid.*, Act VII, p. 194.
18. *Ragh.*, IV. 62.
19. *Abh. Sa.*, Act VII, p. 194.
20. *Mal.*, Act IV, p. 85.
21. *ibid.*, Act V, 30.



22. *ibid.*, Act VI, p. 150.
23. *ibid.*, Act VII, p. 192.
24. *ibid.*, Act VII, p. 194.
25. That also is M.R. Kale's view. See his note, p. 129.
26. Kale, merely attempts the sense of भागधेयानि here when he interprets it as adverse luck, दूरदृष्ट of the Kumārasantoṣiṇī of Ramendra Mohan Bose (Atma Ram & sons., Lahore, p. 583), see his Notes pp. 138-9. He does not explain the plural in the form.
27. Gajendragadkar's Comment :  
The natural but very touching question of Sarvadamana as to who Duṣyanta was brings to Śakuntalā's mind all her previous history, commencing her first meeting with the king. She realizes what important past divinity has played in shaping the ends of her life and replies to Sarvadamana that he should appeal to his own fortunes to get an answer to his question. It was impossible for Śakuntalā to give a direct and definite reply to her son's innocent but so dreadfully touching question. *Abhijñānaśākuntala*, Seventh Edition. The Popular Publishing House, Surat, 1962.
28. Kale interprets it as 'our good luck, being loved by you' (see Notes p. 99) having got transferred to some one else. There is no comment of his or Devachar's or of anybody else on the plural used.
29. Here also भागधेयेषु explained by Kale, see his Notes p. 163, as 'good fortune' or स्वकीयसौजन्यजन्यस्वामिप्राप्तिविषये or the Kumārasantoṣiṇī of Ramendra Mohan Bose, leaves the plural unexplained. It may, as in other cases, refer to the strange turn of events, her being in the upper regions and the coming of her husband there of his own accord to receive her back.
30. *Pūrvamegha*, verse 6.
31. *Uttaramegha*, verse 35.
32. *ibid.*, verse 41.
33. *ibid.*, verse 44.
34. *Ragh.* V. 60.
35. *ibid.*, VI. 58.
36. *ibid.*, VIII. 44.
37. *ibid.*, VIII. 47.
38. *ibid.*, VIII. 50.
39. *Ragh.*, XV. 85.
40. *Ku. Sam.*, IV. 1.
41. *ibid.*, IV. 10.
42. *ibid.*
43. *ibid.*, IV. 31.
44. *ibid.*, VIII. 78



## The Concept of Death in the Upaniṣads

The Upaniṣads represent a high degree or philosophical thinking in India. Much of what they say is through anecdotes and parables. One of these pertains to Naciketas, the young son of the sage Vājaśravasa in the *Kaṭhopanīṣad*. One day, as the young man found his father giving away at the end of a sacrifice cows, old and sterile, the filial anxiety, the Upaniṣad uses the world Śraddhā for this, entered into the mind of the young man who thought that one giving away old and useless cows at the close of the sacrifice goes to joyless worlds, *anandā lokāḥ*. Thinking that his (Naciketas') own gifting away by the father may probably redeem him, he enquired of his father as to whom he would give him. He repeated the question twice and thrice. When he did it for the third time, the father taking the question probably too absurd to be answered shot at him : *Unto death I give thee*. Since the words had come from a Ṛṣi, a sage, they had to come true. Instantly the young man found himself in the abode of the God of Death. As chance would have it, the god was away on his mission of taking away the life of the people. When he returned after three days, he found the young man waiting for him without food and drink. He felt sorry that a Brahmin of all should have had to suffer like this. As an atonement for this he offered him three boons. Against two of these the young man asked for mundane things. The first of these was the pacification of the father. Naciketas wanted that his father to be kind to him and greet him with his anger gone when he would return to him from the abode of death. The second was about the explanation of the fire which leads to heaven, the fire by which those whose world is heaven attain immortality. Both of these the God of Death granted him readily. The third was rather tricky. Through this the young man enquired of the God of Death to explain to him as to what happens to a man after death. He wants him to clear the doubt as to whether



a man continues to exist after death or not. The God of Death first tried to sidetrack the question by persuading the young man not to persist in his question : *Naciketo maraṇam mā'nuprākṣīh!* Don't ask me, Naciketas about death, with an offer of many a material thing but finding him adamant proceeds to answer it. It is the body which dies and not the soul, says he. With the verses which the *Gītā* too reproduces he reiterates that the soul cannot be cut, be burnt, be moistened or dried. It is permanent, omnipresent, stationary, unmoving and everpresent. It changes bodies as one changes clothes. It means, therefore, that a person in the form of the soul is still present, though physically he may have ceased to exist.

Death according to the *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* is something which concerns the material body. Not only death, birth, growth and decay also concern that only. Any kind of material body, inanimate or animate, which is subject to birth is also subject to death. Birth is followed by death. This is the inexorable logic of the phenomenal world. Evolution implies change. We are evolving constantly from one state to another.

The materialistic thinkers in course of their investigation of the relative and the phenomenal world have not found any thing which is unchangeable and immortal and, therefore, they would not concede any such thing as immortality. They cannot visualize a situation which is unchangeable. Their entire thinking is confined to the conditions of time and space and causation. These are the inexorable limitations and within these limitations nothing can be immortal and unchangeable.

What the God of Death points to the young enquirer Naciketas in the *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* is that there is something beyond the phenomenal world and that something called the Soul or Atman is immutable. It is the background to the ego which is unchangeable and immortal. It is very difficult to grasp it, says the Upaniṣad, to appreciate it, it lying hidden in the cavity of the heart. It can be perceived only with a very sharp intellect :

*eṣa sarveṣu bhūteṣu guḍhotmā na prakāśate |  
dṛśyate tv agryayā buddhyā sūkṣmayā sūkṣmadarśibhiḥ |*<sup>2</sup>

In the midst of all the changes, physical, sensuous, mental or intellectual there is a constant quantity which is one's own being. One passes through various changes like the changes from



babyhood to childhood, from childhood to youth, from youth to old age when the young body has gone away and a one has mature body. Every seventh year all the particles of the body change and get renewed but still one is the same person, the identity never changes. The question is : What is the foundation of this identity? It cannot be matter, for, matter is constantly changing. It cannot be energy, for, energy too is changing. It could only be one's own consciousness. Of course, the states of consciousness change, they are always in a state of flux, but the source of consciousness is the same. This source of consciousness is the basic consciousness and is the constant quantity. This constant quantity in Sanskrit is called *Ātman*. It is very difficult to render it in any other language. The word soul for this is not enough. Nor is the word ego. Both these signify the individualized manifestations of the constant quantity. It means that unchangeable something within beings which is the source of intelligence and existence and upon which our relative existence depends. The *Ātman* or the permanent entity is birthless, because one can never think of its birth. One may try to go as far back as possible in one's imagination and try to think of oneself as conscious of non-existence. But one just cannot hope to do so because consciousness or existence are simultaneous, it is just one and the same. As one cannot think of one's beginning or of the time when one did not exist, one cannot think of the time when one shall cease to exist. One is, therefore, deathless. This is the strongest proof of one's immortal nature. One cannot think of one's non-existence. One can think of one's dead body in imagination but one's consciousness is there and, therefore, one is not dead. One can think of one's dead body but one cannot think of the destruction of one's self-consciousness. Consciousness is the constant quantity which is the essence of one's being. It is deathless,, as explained by the Upaniṣads.

As has been said earlier, the constant quantity is very difficult to grasp. The Upaniṣad very rightly says that not many are able to hear of it; of whom not many, even when they hear of it, can comprehend it; wonderful is a man, when found, who is able to teach it; wonderful is he who comprehends it, when taught by an able teacher :



*śravaṇāyāpi bahubhir yo na labhyaḥ  
 śṛṇvanto 'pi bahavo yaṁ na vidyuḥ  
 āścaryo vaktā kuśalo 'sya labdhā  
 āścaryo jñātā kuśalānuṣṭaḥ*<sup>1</sup>

The *Gītā* also echoes the same idea when it says :

*āścaryavat paśyati kaścīd enam  
 āścaryavad vadati tathaiva cānyaḥ  
 āścaryavac cainam anyaḥ śṛṇoti  
 śrutvā 'py enam veda na caiva kaścit'*

"Rarely one beholds the Ātman as a wonder, rarer still is one who speaks and hears it as a wonder and scarcely is one who understands it even on hearing it."

The difficulty of grasping Ātman or the constant quantity becomes apparent when we notice there is no tangible object or abstract idea to compare it with. That is why the Upaniṣads refer to it as, *not this, not this*. It may well be pointed out here that not to talk of an entity like the Ātman, even to give an exact description of gross physical objects is difficult, the objects like a man or an animal. The same can be said of the experience. If one has to describe the taste of a mango, one may find no words for that. Can one say mango tastes like peach, is sweeter than apple, not sour like peach, is no bitter. Will that describe the taste of a mango? Finally one may have to end up by saying that mango tastes like mango. Similar is the difficulty in describing the nature of Ātman. Rarely does one understand and become capable of experiencing the unique entity and when one does experience it, it just mystifies one. It is so easy and so simple. It is just as easy as eating a mango to know its taste but before eating, one must have to get the mango; in the case of Ātman the spiritual preparations are required to experience it.

The realized being after struggling hard knows, as said above, it to be so simple. He can see Ātman everywhere. But he cannot describe it. The Ātman is he himself, *tat tvam asi, tat tvam asi*,<sup>2</sup> as says the Upaniṣad, that are thou, that are thou. If in spite of it somebody can describe it, he must be a wonderful teacher indeed : *āścaryo 'sya vaktā*. So is the listener or the seeker after it: *āścaryo 'sya labdhā*. What a wonderful combination it is : The teacher of immortality and the student of immortality! How is the teacher to teach the pupil? He cannot



describe it, as said above, it is beyond all determinants. He has only to prepare the pupil gradually mentally, morally and spiritually to have a feel of it, to realize it.

By argument one cannot explain what exists after death: *naiṣā tarkeṇa matir āpaneyā*.<sup>6</sup> No argument will be convincing. There cannot be any scientific proof that Ātman exists after death, it is ever-present in the sense that it cannot be verified, observed and demonstrated by sense perceptions; for the obvious reason that the immortal element in us is beyond the reach of the senses. The senses work in and through that immortal part, but the senses in their turn can never reveal it. It is, as says the Upaniṣad, minuter than the minute and grosser than the gross : *anor anīyān mahato mahīyān*.<sup>7</sup> It is said to be seated in the heart of every being: *ātmāsya jantor nihito guhāyām*.<sup>8</sup>

For a fuller appreciation of the concept of death in the Upaniṣads one may have to turn to the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul. Interestingly, in no other Vedic text than the Upaniṣads can the doctrine of soul's transmigration be traced, though the Upaniṣads themselves ascribe it to the *R̥gveda*. The *Bṛhadāranyakopaniṣad*<sup>9</sup> speaks of Vāmadeva, the poet of the *R̥gveda* recognizing himself as Brahman and as a proof of his knowledge of Brahman alleged his acquaintance with his former births as Manu and Sūrya. In the *R̥gveda* itself it was this much that the good people after death continue their existence with gods under the control of Yama. Immortal life with gods is presented in so many hymns of the *R̥gveda*, especially the older ones, as a peculiar gift of the grace of the gods. Of the fate of the wicked obscure indications are contained in the *R̥gveda*. They are predestined for that abysmal place, are hurled by Indra and Soma to the pit or bottomless darkness. Coming to the Brāhmaṇa period in the process of tracing the historical development of the doctrine of transmigration, the idea of recompense is found formulated in contrast to the Vedic conception of an indiscriminate and indefinite felicity of the pious. Being the texts on rituals, the Brāhmaṇas offer for their accomplishment reward and punishment for their non-commission or omission, besides assigning different degrees of compensation to the departed ones proportionate to their



knowledge and actions. A further development of this is the concept in meeting with the same type of actions in the other world as one has been performing in this world. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*<sup>10</sup> very tellingly expresses the idea in the words: "Whatever food a man eats in this world, by the same is he eaten again in the other."

The doctrine of transmigration or the journey of the soul after leaving the body is described in two texts with verbal similarity in two of the Upaniṣads, the *Chāndogya*<sup>11</sup> and the *Bṛhadāranyaka*<sup>12</sup> and is called by Indian authorities as the *Pañcāgnividyā*, the doctrine of five fires which is a combination of the different parts, the doctrine of the five fires and the doctrine of the two ways. The Upaniṣadic text teaches double retribution, one by reward and punishment for good and bad actions in this world and the other by reward and punishment in the other. Carefully looked at it merely is a development of the Vedic thought where the future recompense is hinted at, the good dwell after death with the gods, etc. What is added in the Upaniṣads is the coming back of the people, in the form of their soul assuming another body on the earth and reaping the reward of their actions, good or bad, in the previous birth, the cycle continuing till true knowledge or enlightenment in the form of realization of one's own self dawns and one is released from the bondage of birth and death and gets liberated, *mukta*.

The Upaniṣads do recognize that in between the present existence and the future one, the present birth and rebirth, there are different worlds, the *Lokas*, to which one moves, the worlds of gods, the manes, the Gandharvas, the worlds which are brilliantly lit and the worlds which are dark and dismal, the worlds full of bliss and the worlds without it. The narrative of Naciketas with which the present discussion started also makes a reference to it. It is said there that one gifting cows that are sterile and worn out goes to worlds called *anandās*, the worlds where there is no bliss: *anandā nāma te lokās tām sa gacchati tā dadat*.<sup>13</sup> The station in the *Lokas* or worlds on death is determined by the proportion of the good or bad actions of a person in this world and his knowledge. The *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* explains it through one of the most celebrated of the philosophic seers Yajñavalkya in one of its most brilliant



passages: "After the departure of the soul from the body the knowledge and the works of a person take him by the hand and his former experience, *pūrvaprajñā*. As a caterpillar, after it has reached the tip of a leaf, makes a beginning upon another and draws itself over towards it, so also the soul, after it has shaken off the body and freed itself from ignorance, fashions for itself newer, fairer form, whether it be of the fathers or the Gandharvas, or the gods or Prajāpati or Brahman or other living beings... in proportion as a man consists of this or that, just as he acts, just as he behaves, so will he be born. He who does good, will be born good, he who does evil will be born evil. Therefore, in truth it is said: "Man is altogether and throughout composed of desire (Kāma), in proportion to his desire so is his discretion so he performs acts (Karman-s); in proportion to his acts so does it result to him."<sup>14</sup>

Of the different worlds the soul moves the world of the gods referred to as Devayāna and the world of the fathers referred to as Pitṛyāna are the most important. The pious and the good, it is said, go to the Devayāna, the path of the gods. A detailed description of this is found in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* which says: "On the burning of the corpse the soul enters into the flame, thence to the day, thence into the bright half of the month, thence into the bright half of the year (the summer season), thence into the year, thence into the sun, thence into the moon, thence into the lightning and so finally into Brahman which is said to be the light of lights, *jyotiṣām jyotiḥ*.<sup>15</sup> In the world of fathers, called the Pitṛyāna, the path of the fathers, the manes, to which repair the impious and the wicked, the soul enters the smoke, not the flame, the night, not the day, the dark half of the moon, not the bright, the months of winter, not the summer, the ākāśa, the sky, not the sun and finally into the moon to remain there as long as a remnant of good works yet exists. According to the *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad*.<sup>16</sup> All those who depart from this world go without exception to the moon. There their knowledge is put to test, and according to the result they either go to the Devayāna, the path of the gods which leads to Brahman without return or (the name Pitṛyāna is not used there) they enter upon a new birth, "whether as a worm or a fly or a fish or a bird or a lion or a boar or a serpent or a tiger or a man



or as something else." The above kind of enumeration is found in the *Chandogya Upaniṣad*<sup>17</sup> also. The *Kaṭhōpaniṣad*<sup>18</sup> does not go in for the enumeration but expresses the idea in a nutshell. Some souls, it says, enter the womb to have a body, others to the immovable objects, maybe the plants or the inert world of stones and slabs according to their work and knowledge. The Upaniṣad also teaches the transitoriness of the good works. So long as the good works last is one to be in the Devayāna. With their exhaustion one is to return to the earth : *kṣīṇe punye matyalokam viśanti*.<sup>19</sup>

The Upaniṣadic seers were not satisfied with the discovery so diligently made by them of the movement of the soul from one body to the other as per the actions and as per the knowledge. Their effort was to discover a way by which this movement could be stopped. No birth, no death, which is what immortality is. The secret of this they found in the discovery of their own self : *ātmānam anviccha nihitam guhāyām*, "look for your own self stationed within you" was their advice to mankind. The self called Puruṣa or Brahman needs to be realized and one's identity merged with it to attain immortality. The *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* tries to explain it by different similes. Just as the one fire, after it has entered the world, though one, takes different forms, according to whatever it enters, so the eternal Ātman. As the one Air, after it has entered the world, though one takes different forms, according to whatever it enters, so the eternal Ātman of all living beings, though one, assumes forms according to whatever it enters and is outside all forms. The Upaniṣadic idea can be understood better by referring to a very mundane phenomenon. The electric current that passes through a fan, a bulb, a refrigerator a heater and so on is the same, although because of difference in instruments through which it passes it manifests itself differently as air, light, cold, heat, etc. The Atmatattva similarly remains the same, in spite of the different make-up of the different minds that it comes to function through. Thus it is that you are not me, nor am I you because my mind is constituted differently from yours. Yet our Ātman is the same.

It may not be out of point to mention here that the soul which is said to transmigrate is not the all-pervading soul,



Paramātmān but the individual one, the Jīvātman. The Upaniṣads use the word Ātman for both leading to the confusion as to how the soul the Ultimate Reality, the constant quantity, the Universal Consciousness, be subject to desires and the fruit of good or bad actions to receive which it has to take on a body. The other entity also called Ātman in the Upaniṣads is analogous to what is called *Liṅgaśarīra* or *Sūkṣmaśarīra* in later Vedānta, the Subtle Body, the cumulative feelings and impressions, the Saṁskāras, which are not destroyed by death. These desires, impressions and feelings that persist, that take on a body as per their nature. They are the sign and accompaniment of individuality and do not perish till the individualized soul, the Jīvātman is finally merged in the Universal Soul, the Paramātmān. Till the time the veneer of Saṁskāras continues, continues the cycle of birth and death. It ceases only with the dawn of true enlightenment which is the realization of an individual's identity with the universal. The Saṁskāras which are personal to an individual do not exist then. So do not actions which again are personal. The being is then delivered in the sense that there are no good or bad acts which have to bind him to have realization of their good or bad fruit. With the bondage gone, the being, the Jīva, is emancipated.

In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*<sup>20</sup> the sage Yājñavalkya in answer to a searching query of his intelligent wife who wanted to know the secret of immortality points out : After death there is no consciousness, *na pretya saṁjñāsti*, for a person who has realized Brahman, he becomes Brahman himself. The imperishable, the indestructible, the *avināśin*, the *anucchittidharman*, Ātman has after death no consciousness of matter. The Upaniṣadic literature furnishes many clues as an answer to the query of the young lad Naciketas which could be the query of any intelligent person, the query that has been with mankind since times immemorial as to what happens to a being after death, whether there is continuity for him or cessation. The Upaniṣads are firm in their answer : *eṣā kāmaya mānānām avasthā*,<sup>21</sup> who are ignorant of their true nature. They have to be born and reborn and reborn and have to assume forms as per their actions, good or bad. They may tarry for a while in the different worlds, the worlds for the good



and the worlds for the bad, the Devayāna and the Pitryāna, but they have to come back to the earth to reap the fruit, proportionate to the quality of their actions, which may also determine their forms and the way of their life, pleasant or unpleasant, happy or unhappy. The soul of such persons carries with it what has come to be known in later Vedānta as Liṅgaśarīra or Sūkṣmaśarīra, the subtle body, the cumulative feelings and impressions before entering upon another body which is not destroyed by death. Since it is the sign and accompaniment of individuality, it can never perish till the individualized soul is finally merged in the universal.

## Referances

1. *Kāthopaniṣad*, 1.1.25
2. *ibid.*, 2.3.12
3. *ibid.*, 1.2.7.
4. *Gītā*, 2.2.29. ?
5. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 8.7
6. *Kāthopaniṣad*, 1.2.9.
7. *ibid.*, 1.2.20.
8. *ibid.*
9. *Brhadāranyopaniṣad*, 1.4.10.
10. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, 12.9.1.1
11. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 5.3.10
12. *Brhadāranyopaniṣad*, 6.2
13. *Kāthopaniṣad*, 1.1.3.
14. *ibid.*, 4.4.2-6.
15. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 4.15.5
16. *Kauṣitaki Upaniṣad*, 1.3.
17. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 6.9.3.; 6.10.2.
18. *Kāthopaniṣad*, 2.2.7.
19. *Gītā*, 9.21.
20. *Brhadāranyakopaniṣad*, 2.4.12.
21. *ibid.*, 4.4.26.



## Was Pāṇini an Advaitin?

Though the main purpose of Pāṇini's grammar is to present an analysis of words, he has left certain hints in his work which provide an inkling into the working of his mind. One of these pertains to the word *maskarin* an irregular form and enjoined to be accepted as such, *nipātana*, through the *sūtra* : *maskaramaskariṇau veṇuparivrajakayoḥ* (6.1.154). The irregularity in *maskarin* and the companion *maskara* lies in appearance of *s*, *siḥ* in the original *makara*. If the senses are those of stick and mendicant respectively. The question that obviously arises here is as to why should Pāṇini mention the word *maskarin* in the *sūtra* along with *maskara* which alone could do. *Maskarin* could well be formed from *maskara* with possessive *in*. Whatever irregularity, it is there in *maskara* only. *Maskarin* is only its derivative. The redundancy of its mention would point to its deeper meaning. If the word were to have been formed from *maskara* with *in*, as suggested above, it would mean 'one with a stick'. Now not every one who is with a stick is *maskarin* which would have to be its meaning if the word were to have been formed that way. It signifies a mendicant. Its derivation would have, therefore, to proceed differently. It has to be from the *√kr* 'to do' with *mān* and the suffix *ini* in place of *ṇini* in *tūcchīlya*, habit. The irregularity in *maskarin* would then be two-fold, shortening of the *ā* of *mā* (*i*) and the appearance of the *s*. This has the support of the *Mahābhāṣya* which says:

मस्करिग्रहणं शक्यमकर्तुं कथं मस्करी परिव्राजक इति। इति नैतन्मत्वर्थयिणे  
सिद्धम्। मस्करोऽस्यास्तीति मस्करी परिव्राजक किन्तर्हि मा कृत कर्माणि,  
मा कृत कर्माणि, शान्तिवः श्रेयसीत्याह। अतो मस्करी परिव्राजक  
इत्याह।

*Maskarin* according to the *Mahābhāṣya*, is so called because he advises the people not to engage in action for it is being in peace is which is good for them.

The word *śānti* in the *Mahābhāṣya* refers to the knowledge of quality-less pure Brahman, *nirguṇaśuddha-Brahman*. The



formation of the word *maskarin* in the above manner would suggest that Pāṇini and Patañjali did have the idea of Advaita in their mind. It is the Advaitins who accept as their final principle the renunciation of all actions and attainment of salvation through knowledge.

The other indication of Pāṇini being an Advaitin is provided by his *sūtra*, *janikartuḥ prakṛtiḥ* (1.4.30). Here the word *prakṛti* is in the sense of material cause, the *upādānakāraṇa*, it being known in it. For forming *jani* the suffix *in* of the Uṇādis is to be added to  $\sqrt{\text{jani}}$ . The *vrddhi* to it is avoided by *janivadhyoś ca* (7.3.35), *jani* is then compounded with *kartṛ*. *Janikartuḥ*, would, therefore, mean *jāyamānasya*, one coming into being : The sense of the whole *sūtra* would then be : the material cause, the *prakṛti*, of the one coming into being shall be called Apādāna. Its example is *brahmanah prajāḥ prajāyante* which would mean that it is Brahman who is the material cause of everything. This goes well with the explanation of Śaṅkarācārya in the *Śārirakamīmāṃsā* (1.4.23) of the Upaniṣadic passage यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते, etc. अत्र जनिकर्तुः प्रकृति इति विशेषस्मरणात् पञ्चमी प्रकृतिलक्षण एवापादाने द्रष्टव्या।

Under the *sūtra* अतिशयेन तमबिष्ठनौ (5.3.35) the *Mahābhāṣyakāra* first suggests that the condition that the suffixes enjoined are not added to a *jāti* be laid down so that in instances like *vrkṣo 'yam plakṣo 'yam* the suffixes *tamap*, etc. may not have to be added. Later on he does not express himself in its favour, the world *jāti* meaning 'one which is obtained by production' : *jananena yā prāpyate sā jātiḥ*. Now, such a phenomenon undergoes no excellence or degeneration, *prakarṣa* or *apakarṣa* : न चैतस्यार्थप्रकर्षापकर्षौ स्तः. It may be mentioned here that the meaning of the word *jāti* as given in the *Mahābhāṣya* agrees with the Advaita view. If that were not so, the explanation of *jāti* would prove incomplete in that it would not be able to include in the above, *paramāṇu*, etc., that being not created, *ajanya*. The explanation would be devoid of the defect of incompleteness, *avyāpīdoṣa* only in the Advaita school which accepts atoms, etc. also as created, as should be clear from the *Śārirakamīmāṃsā* (II. 3). This should be clear also from the *Uddyota* on the *Mahābhāṣya*, the *Sphoṭavāda* and the *Laghumañjūsā*.



## Kalidasa's Philosophy of Life

A prolific writer, Kālidāsa has left sufficient indications in his works about his thinking on how life should be led. It is these indications which when pieced together give his view of life, to not as life is being led but as to how it should be led. This is his philosophy of life.

Even when he has dealt with old themes, he has put in their treatment sufficient originality to impart to them something of his own thinking. This, however, is not peculiar to Kālidāsa. Every writer does it. The difference is only in the degree and skill with which his own thinking, his own projections and perceptions on things, are woven into the texture of his works. The skill is required in that these should appear to be deducible covertly from the treatment of the theme rather than appearing overtly. The more consummate the skill, the less covert is the deduction. The less covert is the deduction, the more artistic is the creation.

The master writer, Kālidāsa has touched practically every aspect of human life in his works, also touching *inter alia* on its contact with the divine and the semidivine.

One thing that emerges clearly from the study of Kālidāsa's works is ; he always places duty above all other considerations.

That is the message of *śāpa*, curse, that he introduces in a number of his works. Sakuntalā invited it because she, being engrossed, *ananyamānasā*, in the thoughts of Duṣyanta, did not notice the presence of the sage Durvāsa in the hermitage, *tapodhanam vetṣi na mām upasthitam*<sup>1</sup> which was properly announced by him even though she had been assigned the duty of looking after the guests by her father before he had gone out; *idānīm eva duhitaram śakuntalam atithisatakārāya niyuja ..... gataḥ*.<sup>2</sup> The Yakṣa invited it because of the neglect on his part of his duty, *svādhikārāt pramattaḥ*.<sup>3</sup> which was to



gather fresh flowers for his master Kubera with which he used to offer worship to Śiva. The Yakṣa once, instead of gathering them in the morning, had gathered them the previous evening not wanting to be away from his newly-wedded wife early morning, a fact revealed by Kubera's being stung by a bee coming out of a flower opened up at sun-rise having remained closed in it after the previous sunset. Dilīpa invited it by not circumambulating the divine cow, Surabhi, while returning from the heaven to the earth lost as he was in the thoughts of his wife, *ṛtusnātām imām smaran*, lest he should transgress Dharma, *dharmalopabhayāt*.<sup>4</sup> The Gandharva Prince Priyaṁvada invited it through his conceit from sage Mataṅga who condemned him to elephanthood.<sup>5</sup> The nymph Hariṇī invited it by causing obstacle to the hard penance of sage Tṛṇabindu who condemned her to be born a mortal female on the earth which she did in the form of Indumatī.<sup>6</sup> Daśaratha invited it from the aged father of Śravaṇa, who condemned him to meet, like him, his death in the old age through grief for his son (*putraśoka*) by killing Śravaṇa by mistake.<sup>7</sup> Rāvaṇa invited it from Nalakūbara, who announced the he would have his head broken into thousand pieces if he were ever to have a sexual act with an unwilling woman, by raping Rambhā who had gone to the latter for making love.<sup>8</sup> Tāḍakā invited it from sage Agastya who condemned her to ugly-looking demon-esshood by attacking him.<sup>9</sup> The moon invited it from Dakṣa, who condemned her to suffer from consumption by being excessively attached to only one of his daughters, Rohiṇī, to the exclusion of the others.<sup>10</sup> Kāma invited it from Prajāpati by kindling lustful desire in him for his own daughter. Prajāpati who later, (after he had controlled his senses) condemned him to be burnt to ashes.<sup>11</sup> With his identity discovered, Agni in the form of pigeon invited it from Pārvatī on account of his audacity to enter into the privacy of her love sports with Śiva, though asked by the gods to do so.<sup>12</sup> Urvaśī invited it from Bharata, the first of the dramaturgists, because she, in the course of the performance of a play in Indra's court uttered, through a slip of tongue, the name of Vikrama in place of Puruṣottama.<sup>13</sup>

In all the instances, as mentioned above, it is the common



element of some impropriety or the other which causes curse. Whether impropriety is deliberate or otherwise has little to do with punishment which one committing it has to undergo. Daśaratha had to undergo punishment though he did not mean to kill Śravaṇa. A crime is a crime, wanton or otherwise and can, as a consequence never escape punishment. The common element of impropriety in situations as reproduced above can be broadly divided into three : One, where there is a lapse of some kind or the other on the part of someone, like the use of a wrong word, as in the case of Urvaśī, or causing obstruction to the penance of a sage as in the case of Hariṇī or raping an unwilling woman as in the case of Rāvaṇa, or kindling lustful desire for one's own daughter as in the case of Kāma or the entering into the strict privacy of the love-sports (of Śiva and Pārvatī) as in the case of Agni or just pride or arrogance as in the case of Priyaṁvada. The other, where there is dereliction of duty, the duty that should have been performed but was not performed as in the case of Śakuntalā or of the Yakṣa. The third, where there is conflict between duty and duty, one duty being taken to be more essential than the other as in the case of Dilīpa. By not curcumambulating the divine cow Dilīpa did not permit himself dereliction out of just neglect or wantonness; he wanted to avoid committing an impropriety: *dharmalopa-bhayāt*. Even this extenuating factor did not help him in escaping the punishment. Here was a conflict between duties, one towards a human being, his own wife and the other towards a divine being, the divine cow. Between the duty towards a human being and the duty towards a divine being, it is the duty towards the divine being that must have precedence. Among different duties to be performed by a person, an order of priority has to be maintained. To ignore it is also dereliction deserving punishment.

Life is a tight rope walk for any individual. No emotional or sentimental considerations can extenuate his impropriety for which he has to suffer. That is the inexorable law of life. Even Agni, the divine being and the Yakṣa, the semidivine being could not escape it. Agni episode has one more lesson. An impropriety committed by one's own self or inspite of one self



under the spell of certain circumstances or an impropriety committed at the behest of some one and even with the best of motives means no difference. Agni intruded into the privacy of the Primeval Couple, Śiva and Pārvatī interrupting their love-sports, at the behest of the gods; *abhyartihaḥ śakramukhaiḥ suraiḥ*<sup>14</sup> who wanted a son to be born to Pārvatī through Śiva, who could alone destroy the demon Tāraka. That did not help him from being cursed to be all-consuming, leperous, of terrible act and with smoke within:

*ivam sarvabhakṣo bhava bhūmakāyāḥ  
kuṣṭābhībhūto 'nala dhūmagarbhaḥ  
iṭham śaśāpādrisutā hūtaśam  
ruṣṭā ratānāndasukhasya bhaṅgāt*<sup>15</sup>

It would have been unfair to punish only the being who was just carrying out somebody's orders. The prompters have also to get it. The gods also got it. They were not to have any issue from their wives.

Kālidāsa's view of life seems to have been the eternal principle: too much of every thing is bad. Unitrack approach he did not appreciate. To get engrossed in one thing only to the neglect of the other did not go well with him. Śakuntalā was *ananyamānasā*, Dilīpa's thinking was occupied solely with the thoughts of his wife, *smaran*. It was this which was bad. To think of the wife or the lover or the beloved, Kālidāsa, the poet of tender love, could not have objected. What he objected to was the sole preoccupation with it. A balance has to be struck in life.

Kālidāsa seems to believe in the principle of reformation. Nobody needs to be condemned for all time for his or her lapse, more so when the lapse is not deliberate. In most cases he limits the curse to the unfolding of certain situations. He seems to believe that a limited period of punishment would chasten a person, purging him off his sins of omission and commission. A person so chastened and purged needs to be restored to his original form in such cases where it has been changed by way of punishment and to happiness. Thus Śakuntalā's curse he limited to the sight of an ornament of recognition, of Urvaśī to the sight of her son, of Dilīpa to the propitiation of Nandinī, of



Hariṇī to the sight of celestial flowers, of Priyaṁvada to the piercing of the temple in his elephant-form by the scion of the race of Raghu.

In an odd case or two the *śāpa* is not limited to the development of certain situations. Its period is just limited. The curse in the case of the Yakṣa is limited to one year only ; *śāpenātaṅgamitamahimā varṣabhogyeṇa*.<sup>16</sup> Occasionally the *śāpa* is limited to physical violence. Priyaṁvada was to be shot at the temple in his elephant form by a scion of the Raghu's race to come back to his original form. Kabandha was to be killed by Rāma to be rescued from his grotesque form and to go to heaven :

*vadhanīrdhūtaśāpasya kabandhasya*<sup>17</sup>

That *śāpa* is punishment is beyond question but in certain cases it was not an unmixed blessing Urvaśī was condemned to turn into a mortal and stay with a man she was passionately in love with. Hariṇī was born as Indumatī and got in Aja a husband whose devotion to her has few parallels. Daśaratha was cursed to die of *putraśoka*<sup>18</sup>, which did carry in it an ironical blessing in that till the time of inviting the curse he was issueless and was pining to have one :

*śāpo 'pyadrṣṭatanayānanapadmaśobhe  
sānugraho bhagavatā mayi pātito 'yaṁ*

For Kālidāsa, of the three Puruṣārthas, Dharma is at the apex, the other two, Artha and Kāma, also leading to it and becoming one with it. That is the message of his line in the context of the description of Dilīpa :

*apy arthakāmau tasyāstām dharma eva manīṣīṇaḥ*<sup>19</sup>

*yāthā rāja tathā prajāḥ*, as the king, so the subjects, being the well-known saying, the Kings had to undergo greater rigour in their personal life to set an example to others. Not that every king was a paragon of virtues. The actual position vis a vis the ideal one, as enunciated by the poet in the context of enumeration of Dilīpa's qualities, would have been different as can be gleaned from the hot exchange between Śārṅgarava and Duṣyanta in the latter's court. Śārṅgarava bluntly points to the deceit and chicanery of the ruling elite of his time who



grow with them, who learn them as an art: *parātisandhānam-adhīyate ye vidyēti*.<sup>20</sup>

Kālidāsa was a believer in the set norms of the contemporary social life. Girls could choose husbands for themselves. Many of the girls had done so and the elders of the time had approved of their choice. So far it was in the open, it was all right. When it was done secretly, *rahaḥ*, particular care was necessary, *parīkṣya kartavyam..... saṅgataṃ*<sup>21</sup> for the girls could be deceived by the unscrupulous, *ajñāta-hṛdayas*, and consequently had to suffer for the most of their lives. Kālidāsa seems to be giving expression to his own thinking on the subject through Śārṅgarava who terms such unions as *cāpala*, rash deed:

*ittham ātmakṛtaṃ cāpalaṃ dahati*.<sup>22</sup>

Kālidāsa was the great lover of beauty, physical, material and spiritual. Nothing less than superb would appeal to him. In his descriptions of things and events he would give free play to his imagination to conceive of as much of excellence as he possibly could. He seems to set norms for male and female beauty in his descriptions of Dilīpa, Raghu and the ruler of Avanti on the one hand and the Yakṣī on the other. Stronger of the two sexes, the male, has to look manly, his entire physique exuding it. Of all the males, the king being at the top should in all propriety, look the manliest of the manly. There are at least three places in the works of the great poet where manliness, the essential characteristic of male handsomeness, is described picturesquely. The two out of these pertain to the father and son combine. The father, Dilīpa, is said to be *vyūḍhorasko vṛṣaskandhḥ śālaprāṇśur mahābhujah*<sup>23</sup>, broad-chested, stout shouldered, tall as the Śāla tree and massive-armed. The son, Raghu, is said to be *yuvā yugavyāyatabāhur aṃsalaḥ kapāṭa-vakṣāḥ parinaddhakandharaḥ*,<sup>24</sup> 'young with arms as long as the yoke of a car, chest as broad as a folding door, and a neck well-turned'. While nothing is said openly, the descriptions do leave traces of the fine distinction between the handsomeness of the old male and the young male, both of them being the model of the same no doubt. While the old one with strong chest is *vyūḍhoraskaḥ*, broad chested, the young one is *kapāṭavakṣāḥ*, with a door like chest : while the old one is



*mahābhujah*, with long arms, the young one is *yugavyā-yatabāhuḥ*, with arms stretched out like a yoke; while the old one is *vr̥ṣhaskandhah*, with shoulders like those of the humps of bulls, the young one is *aṁsalah*, with well-knit shoulders. About tallness there is no mention in the case of the young one. The old one alone is described as *śālaprāṇśuḥ*, as tall as the Sāla tree. The total impact left by the two, even according to Kālidāsa, is that the young one is more majestic in figure than the old one, *vapuḥprakarṣād ajayad gurum Raghuḥ*. The third place where male handsomeness is described pertains to the ruler of Avanti on the occasion of the Svayamvara of Indumatī. The description is : *avantinātho 'yam udagrabahur viśālavakṣās tanuvṛttamadhyah*,<sup>25</sup> this is the ruler of Avanti, with long arms, broad chest and slender, round waist. The addition here, in respect of the two earlier descriptions, is with regard to the waist while there is no reference to height and shoulders. His handsomeness is said to be like that of the sun trimmed off with care by Tvaṣṭṛ by placing on his round lathe : *āropyā cakrabhramam uṣṇatejās tvaṣṭreva yatnollikhito vībhāti*.

In all the above cases Kālidāsa has uniformly ascribed certain qualities like long arms and broad chest to every one of the three, while certain other qualities like the excessive height, well-turned neck and slender, well-rounded waist only to specific rulers. Interestingly even in description of common qualities he has used each time different words which may bring to the fore highly artistically the fine distinction even among them. Dilīpa is *mahābhujah*, Raghu is *yugavyāyatabāhuḥ*, the ruler of Avanti is *udagrabāhuḥ*. Dilīpa is *vyūḍhoraskāḥ*, Raghu is *kapāṭavakṣah*, the ruler of Avanti is *viśālavakṣāḥ*. Dilīpa is *vr̥ṣhaskandhah*. Raghu is *aṁsalah*.

The female beauty as mentioned in the *Meghadūta* in the context of the Yakṣī, makes her, in the words of the poet himself, the best of the creations of the creator : *yā tatra syād yuvativīṣaye sr̥ṣṭir ādyeva dhātuḥ*.<sup>26</sup> The Yakṣī was slender-framed, youthful, with pointed teeth with the lower lip resembling a ripe *bimba* fruit, thin in the middle, with eyes like those of a frightened deer, deep navel and gait, slow with the weight of her hips, slightly stooping on account of her breasts.



As for the material beauty, the best expression of it is found in the description of the city of Alakā and there too in the palace of the Yakṣa which, as the work says, is noticeable from a distance with its main gate of rainbow-like charm. Inside it are the red Aśoka and the Kesara trees adjoining the hedge of Kuravakas with Mādhavi creepers forming a canopy over it. Near them is a pleasure hillock of sapphire linked by golden plantain trees. It has tank with its flight of steps of emeralds, covered as it is all over by blooming golden lotuses with their stalks of lapis lapuzi. Close to it is a resting place of gold topped by a crystal slab with its stand studded at the bottom by gems of the colour of bamboo of not excessive glow. On it in the evening a peacock, the pet of the Yakṣī, would appear and would dance to the accompaniment of marking of time by her.<sup>27</sup> The description is unmatched in Sanskrit literature for its grand vision of the costliest of the jewels and stones. Kālidāsa loves grandeur. In his vision renunciation and acquisition go together. On the one hand he describes the hermitages of Kaṇva, Mārīca and Vālmiki, on the other the most prosperous of the cities of Alakā and Ujjayinī with the high rise buildings of the one and the costliest of the merchandise, the heaps of pearls and jewels of the other. Life according to Kālidāsa had to be lived in its fulness. Spiritualism is in no case to be divorced from materialism. The only care that needed to be exercised was that greater consideration was to be shown to spiritualism, which was taken to be the mainstay of society. The greatest of the kings, the allies of even Indra in battles like Duṣyanta would have to cast off their regal outfit for putting on an humble appearance to enter a penance grove : *vinītaveṣeṇa praveṣṭavyāni tapovanāni nāma*.<sup>28</sup> No taxes were due from the hermits. One sixth of their penance itself was taken to be, like the one sixth of the produce from the producers or earnings from merchants and traders, as the revenue to the State with this difference that it was imperishable and non-depletable: *tapah ṣaṭhbḍāgamakṣayyaṁ dadaty āraṇyakāḥ hi naḥ*.<sup>29</sup> According to Kālidāsa the contribution of sages and hermits to the upkeep of the State is far greater than other segments of society. The State authority, he believes, has to have a spiritual



base to sustain itself. A combination of the two is, what leads to the growth of both : *pavanāgnisamāgamo hy ayaṁ sahitaṁ brahma yad astratejasā*.<sup>30</sup> This *samāgama* is also required for conserving the spiritual power attained with hard penance. *Śāpa*, curse, the one means with the holy for protection and for warding off obstructions and obstacles is to be used, leading as it does to the frittering away of the hard- earned meirt, very sparingly : *trāṇābhāve hi śāpāstrāḥ kurvanti tapaso vyayam*<sup>31</sup>. It is for the State authority to look to their well being.

Kālidāsa seems to attach great importance to education. Even an emperor like Raghu goes out to meet a young graduate, Kautsa, who has just finished his education and who approaches him for *dakṣiṇā* to his teacher with an honorific offering, *arghya*.<sup>32</sup> Duṣyanta is equally respectful to young sage lads, Śārṅgarava and Śāradvata.<sup>33</sup>

Kālidāsa believes that in the life of an individual there are two kinds of forces operating at one and the same time, one trying to create difficulties for him, bringing unhappiness and misery to him and the other trying to help him through them. One represents the *nigrahadhārā* and the other the *anugrahadhārā*. This can best be seen in the life of Śakuntalā. The very circumstances of the birth of the hapless lady were unfortunate. The mother deserted her as soon as she delivered her. Kaṇva, the sage, took pity on her and brought her up. Forseeing that illuck was to befall her, he took pilgrimage to Somatīrtha to avert it : *dātvam asyāḥ pratikūlaṁ śamayitum somatīrthaṁ gataḥ*.<sup>34</sup> After she had been repudiated by Duṣyanta, her mother deposited her in the hermitage of the sage Mārīca in the higher regions where she gave birth to a son, Bharata, whose birth rites, etc., were all performed by the sage who also bestowed on him the protective rosary, the *raṅgākaraṇḍaka*, which when touched by some one other than the father and mother would turn into a serpent and be bitten by it :

Prathamā : *eṣāparājitā nāmauśadhir asya jātakarmasamaye Bhagavatā Mārīcena dattā. yetāṁ kila mātāpitarāv ātmānaṁ ca varjayitvā'paro bhūmipatitaṁ na grhṇāti*



Rajā : *atha gr̥hṇāli?*

Prāthamā : *tatas taṁ sarpo bhutvā daśati.*<sup>35</sup>

The sages Kaṇva and Mārīca represent for Śakuntalā the *anugrahadhārā*. So do her friends Priyaṁvadā and Anasūyā who beseech the fiery sage Durvāsas for pardon which makes him relent to the extent of limiting the curse to the sight of an ornament of identification : *abhijñānābharaṇadarśanena śāpo nivartīṣyate*.<sup>36</sup> Menakā who forsakes her after birth and Durvāsas who curses her to be forgotten by Duṣyanta represent the *nigrahadhārā*. Incidentally, the story of the *Abhijñānā-śākuntala* seems to have been woven by the master playwright around four seers, one who gives birth to Śakuntalā, the other who brings her up, the third who curses her to be forgotten by her husband and the fourth who gives her shelter after her repudiation by him and in whose Āśrama she gets united with him. The same *nigrahadhārā* and the *anugrahadhārā* are found in the life of Sītā as well. While she is left in the dreary forest by Lakṣmaṇa under the orders of Rāma; it is the sage Vālmiki who following her cries, *tadruditānusārī*,<sup>37</sup> takes her to his hermitage inviting her to live in his Āśrama. If there is cruelty on one hand there is pity on the other. This is how Kālidāsa views life where there is no unmitigated sorrow or unhappiness.

All along Kālidāsa has been accepted as a poet of tender love. That he is no doubt. But his love is to be purged of passion to make it enduring. It is not mere mythology that Kāma out to generate passion in Śiva was burnt to ashes. This does not mean that love in Śiva dies. Simply Pārvatī has to divert it to her by hard penance. The unique love blooms forth then, *kva tādṛśaṁ prema*.<sup>38</sup> Śakuntalā has also to purge herself of it by undergoing great mental and emotional shock and a life of great hardship : *niyamakṣāmamukhī dhṛtaikaveṇiḥ*.<sup>39</sup> When she is united with Duṣyanta she had passed through a period of terrible stress and strain and was no longer the young impulsive maiden falling headlong for a stranger addressing love letters to him. A sober lady with a poise and dignity she was just ripe for the kind of love that does not steam off with years.

Kālidāsa's whole outlook on life is governed by tradition which seems to exercise its firm hold on him. Though protesting



initially at the unjust and cruel behaviour of the husbands towards their wives, he resigns himself to ascribing everything to fate and making the women, true to Indian tradition, exonerate husbands of their misdemeanour. In the *Raghuvamśa* when Lakṣmaṇa delivered the cruellest of the cruel of orders of Rāma that he had forsaken her, Sītā though completely taken unawares and stung deep, did not find fault with him (Rāma) but condemned only her own unfortunate self again and again:

*na cāvadaḍ-bhartur avarṇam āryā  
nirākariṣṇor vṛjinād rūtē'pi  
ātmānam eva sthira-duḥkhabhājāṁ  
punāḥ punar duṣkṛtināṁ nininda*<sup>40</sup>

The only time there was a streak of protest in her was when she asked Lakṣmaṇa after regaining herself : *vācyaś tvayā madvacanā tsa rājā*.<sup>41</sup> You tell that king in my name that is it befitting for his family that he forsook her, purified in fire before his very eyes. The expression *sa rājā*, that king, for the husband, reveals more biting than anything else, Sītā's writhing pain at his being a King only and not a husband ; a king who, to avoid public censure and to implant firmly morality among his subjects by his precept, has forsaken his pregnant wife not caring for the fact that her purity had been tested in fire before his very eyes. This mood, interestingly, persists only for a moment. The next moment she relapses into her old self and holds the misdeeds of her previous births for the unfortunate development, *mamaiva janmāntarapātakānaṁ vipākavisphūrjathur aprasahyaḥ*.<sup>42</sup> With all that was done to her, she prays that she should have the same husband even in the next birth and that there be no separation : *jananāntare'pi tvam eva bhartā na ca viprayogaḥ*.<sup>43</sup> Kālidāsa's faith in the self-abnegating and self effacing nature of Indian womanhood, nurtured all through, is too deep-rooted to be shaken under any circumstances. This is noticeable in his treatment of Śakuntalā and Dhārīṇī as well. The former, repudiated by husband and dealt with the cruellest of the blows has only her fate to blame *sā niṇdanī svāni bhāgyāni bālā*.<sup>44</sup> In the last Act of the *Abhijñānaśākuntalā* when Bharata enquires of her as to who the unknown man, Duṣyanta is, her cryptic remark is, *vatsa te bhāgadheyāni prccha*<sup>45</sup>, my child, ask your



fate. To Duṣyanta her remark is *nūnam me sucarita pratibandhakam purākrtaṁ teṣu divaseṣu pariṇāmābhī mukhamasīd yena sānukroṣo 'py āryaputro mayi virasaḥ samvṛtataḥ*<sup>46</sup>, certainly an (evil) deed done by me in a past life obstructing (the action of my) virtue (merit) was in those days about to bear fruit by which my Lord, although compassionate by nature, became heartless towards me. As for Dhārīṇī, she would not like Agnimitra to go in for another woman. She rebukes him in pungent satirical words when she notices him attracted towards Mālavikā in a dance scene : *yadi rājakāryeṣv apīdṛśy upā yanipu ṇatā 'ryaputrasya tataḥ śobhanam bhavet*,<sup>47</sup> 'such efficiency would be good, if shown in the affairs of the State'. She persuades herself ultimately when all her efforts fail to checkmate intimacy developing between her husband and the young damsel Mālavikā, to arrange for the union of the two entailing tremendous sacrifice on her part leading to Parivrājikā Kauśikī to observe that the noble women attached to their husbands serve them even if it be against their desires: *pratīpakṣeṇāpi patiṁ sevante bhartrvatsalāḥ sādhyāḥ*.<sup>48</sup>

As is Dhārīṇī of the *Mālavikāgnimitra* so is Auśinārī of the *Vikramorvaśīya*. She is upset, understandably, on coming to know of the secret love affair of her husband with Ūrvaśī first through a maid and later through the love letter of Ūrvaśī on a birchbark that is per chance flown to her by wind with which she approaches him (her husband) while the search for it is on. The husband apologizes to her by touching her feet and by saying that he is of course guilty, be pleased, *aparādhi namahaṁ prasīda*<sup>49</sup> which, however, fails to assuage her feelings to which she gives expression in the words, *nāsti bhavato 'parādhah aham evātrāparaddhā yā pratikūladarśanā bhūtva agratas te tiṣṭami*<sup>50</sup>, 'there is no fault on your part. Here I alone am at fault in that I, the unwanted, stand before you'. She goes out not caring outwardly for the husband trying to bring her round though afraid inwardly of the penitence : *mā khalu laghuḥṛdayā 'ham anunayam bahu manye kintu dākṣiṇyakṛtāt paścāttāpād bibhemi*.<sup>51</sup> Later this feeling of penitence overpowers her and she observes the vow of placating the loved one; *priyānuprasādana*, at which she, the Pativrata, that is how



she is called by Citralekhā, the friend of Ūrvaśī announces her decision: *adyaprabhṛti yām striyam āryaputraḥ prārthayate yā āryaputrasya samāgamapranayinī tayā mayā prītibandhena vartitavyam*.<sup>52</sup> 'From today onwards I shall be bound in love to any woman whom my husband loves or who longs for my husband's company'. She wants to see that her husband is happy even at the cost of her own happiness : *aham khalv ātmanah sukhāvasānena āryaputraṁ nirvṛtaśarīraṁ kartum icchāmi*.<sup>53</sup>

The faithful Indian woman would always look to the desires of their husbands, not even once permitting themselves any action otherwise: *bhavanti avyabhicāriṇyo bhartur iṣṭe pativratāḥ*.<sup>54</sup> That is indeed what traditional Indian Womanhood is and it is this which Kālidāsa has portrayed. She always had stood for the happiness of the husband not caring for that of her own.

Like a traditionalist Kālidāsa believes in all powerful fate : *athavā bhavitavyānām dvārāṇi bhavanti sarvatra*.<sup>55</sup> 'Things destined to happen find their ingress everywhere'; the good or the bad deed, in the present birth being the result of the corresponding deeds of the previous births. To him everything is preordained and must proceed accordingly.

Though Kālidāsa is a firm believer in tradition he does not think it is completely unchanging and static. Tradition, according to him, has to inter-mingle with individual experience. In the last analysis it is one's own self that is to guide one in one's conduct. In matters of doubt, says he, it is the voice of conscience, the inclination of the heart, that is to prevail: *satām hi sandehapadeṣu vastuṣu pramāṇam antaḥkaraṇa pravṛttayaḥ*.<sup>56</sup>

Kālidāsa, was one of those few poets who were not motivated in their work by only material or mundane considerations. While striving to achieve the three-fold aim of life, the three Puruṣārthas, Dharma, Artha and Kāma, he pinned his sight on the fourth one, Mokṣa. In the beginning he was, like any other of his ilk, motivated in his literary activity by considerations of fame: *kaviyaśaḥprārthī*,<sup>57</sup> a mundane consideration indeed. But as and as he had progressed in his literary activity, he seems to pray for himself-- it is with this



that he closes his immortal work, the *Abhijñānaśākuntalā*-- not anything material but only emancipation from rebirth: *mamāpi kṣapayatu nīlaloḥitaḥ punarbhavaṃ parigataśaktir ātmabhūh*.<sup>59</sup> Kālidāsa's prayer seems to have been answered. For the past one thousand years or so none has equalled him. God does not seem to have endowed his soul with another body.

### Note

The following editions of Kālidāsa's have been used in this article

- i. *Vikramorvaśīya*, (*Vikra*) ed. Shankar Pandurang Pandit, Sanskrit Series No. XVI, Bombay, 1901.
- ii. *Mālavikāgnimitra* (*Mal.*) ed. M.R. Kale, The Standard Publishing Co., Bombay, 1918.
- iii. *Abhijñānaśākuntala* (*Abh. Śā*) ed. M.R. Kale, Gopal Narayan & co., Bombay, 1920.
- iv. *Raghuvamśa* (*Ragh.*) Nirnaya Sagar Press, Bombay, 1920.
- v. *Kumārasambhava* (*Ku. Sam.*) ed. M.R. Kale, Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi, 1981.
- vi. *Meghadūta* (*Megh.*) ed. M.R. Kale, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1974.

### References

1. *Abh. Sa.* Act IV. verse 1
2. *ibid.*, Act, I, p. 15.
3. *Megh.*, verse 1
4. *Ragh.*, 1.76.
5. *ibid.*, V. 53.
6. *ibid.*, VIII. 80.
7. *ibid.*, IX. 78.
8. *Ragh.*, X. 47.
9. *ibid.*, XI. 14.
10. *ibid.*, XIX. 48
11. *Ku. Sam.*, IV. 42-3.
12. *ibid.*, IX. 16.
13. *Vikr.*, Act III, Viṣkambhaka
14. *Ku. Sam.*, IX. 9.



15. *Kum. Sam.* IX.16.
16. *Megha.* I
17. *Ragh.*, XII. 57
18. *ibid.*, IX.80
19. *ibid.*, I.25
20. *Abh.Sa.*, V.25
21. *ibid.*, V.24.
22. *Ibid.*, Act V, p. 133.
23. *Ragh.*, I.13.
24. *ibid.*, III.34.
25. *ibid.*, VI. 32.
26. *Megha.*, Uttaramegha, Verse 21
27. *ibid.*, verses 14-18.
28. *Abh. Sā.* Act I. p. 17.
29. *ibid.*, Act, II.13.
30. *Ragh.*, VIII.4.  
Manu also supports this :  
*nābrahma kṣatramṛdhnōti nākṣtra brahma vardhatii*  
*brahma kṣatram ca saṁpr̥ktamiha cāmutra vardhatii* IX.322
31. *Ragh.*, XV.3
32. *ibid.*, V.2
33. *Abh. śā.*, Act V, p.118.
34. *ibid.*, Act I, p.15.
35. *Abh. śā.*, Act VII. p. 191.
36. *ibid.*, Act VII, p. 189.
37. *Ragh.*, XIV.70
38. *Ku.Sam.*, V.2
39. *Abh. Śā.*, VII.21
40. *Ragh.*, XIV.57
41. *ibid.*, XIV.61
42. *ibid.*, XIV.62
43. *ibid.*, XIV.66
44. *Abh.Śā.*, V.30
45. *ibid.*, Act VII, p.194.
46. *Ibid.*
47. *Mal.*, Act I, p. 21.
48. *ibid.*, Act V.19
49. *Vikr.* Act II, p. 65.
50. *ibid.*, Act II. 21
51. *Vikr.*, Act II, p. 66.
52. *ibid.*, Act IV, pp. 95-96
53. *ibid.*, Act III, p. 97.



- 54. *Ku. Sam.*, VI. 86.
- 55. *Abh. Śā.*, Act I. 15.
- 53. *Abh. Śā.*, Act I. 20
- 57. Mammaṭa mentions yaśa, fame, as the first of the motivations for composing poetry.
- 58. *Ragh.*, I. 3
- 59. *Abh. Śā.*, VII. 35.



## Suffering : How Indian Thinkers Look at it

Suffering begins in the life of a man with his very birth. The biological process itself entails it. The mother undergoes it in the very process of delivery, the birth pangs as it is called. She has to go through utmost pain to bring life out into the open. This is as nature has ruled. It has not devised a softer way of childbirth. It is no wonder then that the ancient sages and seers of India were motivated to go to the root of suffering and the removal of it by stressing the importance of not having to undergo births and concomitantly not to suffer death. They tried to think of finding the way to break through the birth and death syndrome. The way to it they discovered in self-realization, the discovery of the identity of the individual with the supreme.

There are a number of words for suffering in Sanskrit : *duḥkha*, *pīḍā*, *ārti*, *kaṣṭa*, *kleśa*, *vyathā*, *ādhi*, *śoka*, *viṣāda*, *avasāda*, *vyākulātā* and so on. Just as there are different kinds of suffering, so are the different words for them. It could be the physical suffering, the mental suffering and the intellectual suffering. There could be difference in the degree of suffering too, like pain, which could be mild, acute and severe. At the physical level it could be *pīḍā* or *ārti*. At the mental level it could be *vyathā*, *cintā*, *ādhi*, *viṣāda* and *avasāda*, anguish, anxiety, sorrow, depression and worry. At the intellectual level it is unsteadiness or indecision, *vyākulātā*. *kaṣṭa* and *kleśa* go with all kinds of suffering. *duḥkha* is more on the mental side. *pīḍā*, *kaṣṭa*, *kleśa* and *ārti* overlap both physical and mental levels.

Interestingly, the etymology of the word *duḥkha*, the most common word for suffering in Sanskrit reveals the thinking of the Indians with regard to it. *duḥkha* is a combination of two words, *dus* and *kha*, the former meaning bad and the latter the



senses. *sukha* and *duḥkha* with *kha* meaning senses as the second part carry the basic idea that happiness and unhappiness touch only the senses and not the essential being, the soul or the *ātman*.

The suffering, the *duḥkha*, can broadly be divided in two categories. The first refers to that which concerns itself with worldly objects. The non-attainability of the objects, which provide us happiness, gives us unhappiness. The non-availability of the adequate means of livelihood, the intended post or position, the fame to which an individual thinks he is rightfully entitled, the non-fulfilment of ambitions all this results in stress and strain, worry and anxiety and results in suffering. The loss of something precious or that to which one has taken fancy and separation from one's loved ones and the compulsion to be with those one would like to avoid also cause suffering. But this suffering being related to a specific cause may well be transitory. With the disappearance of the cause it would go. With the change of position the agony caused by stagnation and non-recognition of one's potential may cease. The union with the loved ones may bring back happiness. So would the avoidance of the company of the disliked ones.

There is, however, another kind of suffering, the second category that is invariable like the suffering caused by old age or by diseases. It is to get over this kind of suffering that prompts Śaṅkarācārya to give a call to people to awaken:

*janma duḥkham jarā duḥkham vyādhir duḥkham punaḥ punaḥ  
maraṇam tu mahad duḥkham tasmā jāgrhi jāgrhi*

"The birth is suffering, the old age is suffering, the disease is repeated suffering, and the death is great suffering. So, O ye, wake up, wake up."

In the words of the *Mahābhārata*

*arthepsutā param duḥkham arthaprāptis tato 'dhikam  
jātasnehasya cārtheṣu viprayoge mahattamam*

"The desire for worldly objects is great suffering. Greater than that is arranging for their upkeep, safety and security after they have been obtained. Still greater than that is separation from them after one has developed attachment to them."



Śaṅkarācārya is very right in describing death as great suffering, *mahad duḥkham*, an idea that had found expression as early as the *Mahābhārata* which says *duḥkham hi mṛtyur bhūtānām*, death is great suffering for beings. People are afraid of it, scared of it, because, says the *Mahābhārata*, they have the feeling that they are not through all they had wished to do: *prāyeṇākṛtakṛtyatvān mṛtyor udvijate janah*.

What happens when one is suffering? Sanskrit literature furnishes ample graphic description of it. In the battle of Kurukshetra Arjuna finding his teachers, fathers, grandfathers, uncles, brothers, cousins, nephews and other relatives arraigned against him in battle feels utterly distraught. His limbs weaken, his mouth is parched, body trembles, hair stands upright, skin burns, his principal armament Gāṇḍīva appears slipping from his hand, his head is whirling. He seems completely bowled over. This is what happens in suffering. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* Lakṣmaṇa having been struck with a spear and taken for dead leaves Rāma totally devastated ruing his misfortune in the strongest of terms and bewailing and bemoaning. With the capital shifted from Ayodhyā to the newly-founded city of Kuśāvati by Kuśa, the son of Rāma the former presents a picture of desolation with its deafening silence broken by the occasional hooting of owls and howling of jackals. The end of the *Mahābhārata* war presents a ghastly scene of a battlefield with broken limbs strewn all over with wild beasts praying on them and the royal ladies identifying their loved ones with the ornaments they had worn or their severed arms and hands with all their cries of agony. Daśaratha is all sorrow at the prospect of his beloved son Rāma taking to exile to the point of losing his consciousness first and his life later. So is Kausalyā who reviles her fate in writhing agony. The condition of the city of Ayodhyā is no better either with its denizens shedding tears and feeling forlorn. Sītā yells and shrieks and cries when abducted by the powerful demon Rāvaṇa. She is a picture of sorrow all through her period of captivity in the Aśoka grove in Lāṅkā.

There are people in the world whose destiny it is to suffer the greatest of misfortunes. They are subject to some suffering



or other all through their life.

Even in the midst of the most favourable of the circumstances when going appears to be smooth for them some tragedy or the other strikes them most unexpectedly reducing them to utmost straits. They may have nothing to do with the circumstances of the tragedy. It may be due to completely different factors but the evil impacts them so much as to completely bowl them over. The question is why it should happen so. The answer to this, according to Indian thinkers, lies in the theory of Karman. It is the past action vicious enough that impact the life of a person in the present birth through the law of retribution. The *Gītā* says unequivocally that one has to reap the fruit of one's actions, good or bad, *avaśyam eva bhoktavyam kṛtaṁ karma śubhāśubham*. If adversity strikes a person for no reason in this birth, its genesis may have to be traced to actions in previous births, which have occasioned it in this birth with all the suffering and sorrow. The Indian view of suffering, therefore, is not limited to this birth only; it goes over to previous births and to actions performed therein providing a logical basis for them. There is nothing like a chance phenomenon in Indian thinking something that needs to be properly appreciated by people outside India. For divining it a deeper look into the Indian psyche is a must.

What is called fate or destiny outside India is nothing for Indians but the result of their own actions, the *karmans*,—could be past, could be present performed knowingly or unknowingly, good or bad. That being the case, it gives even the average Indian resilience to withstand all the sorrow and suffering, all the pain and anguish for, he cannot blame some one else for this, if only, he is just to blame himself, for, it is he who had permitted himself such deeds as were causing him suffering now. This imparts a feeling of fortitude to him, lessening to a very significant extent the impact of the tragedy, the pain, the sorrow and the suffering. This also exercises a chastening influence on the sufferer not to indulge in evil practices or to keep them to the minimum at the least.

One of the most telling instances of the hold of the theory of Karman on the Indian psyche is provided by the instance of



the discarding of Sītā in a dreary forest under the orders of Rāma. When the news is broken to her by her escort that she is being forsaken for fear of spread of public calumny, she feels shattered but the next moment rallies herself and says, to quote the words of Kālidāsa: *mamaiva janmāntarapātakānām vipākavisphūrjathur aprasahyaḥ*, the unbearable thunder is the result of my own sins in previous births. This also explains as to why some people have to undergo a chain of misfortunes with a trail of sorrow and suffering at every turn while others lead a more steady, calm and peaceful life.

According to Indian thinkers the feeling of distress is not uniform in all individuals. The impact of suffering and the pain and anguish that it entails is relative to their nature. What is suffering to one is the otherwise of it to another. This is best illustrated by a Buddhist parable. A Buddhist master had two monks as his disciples. One day he asked one of them to observe fast while to the other he did not say any such thing. During noon a cook placed a bowl of food before the other one, the only meal for the day which he began eating merrily; the other monk ordered to fast looking at him jealously, not able to make out as to why the master made him starve and allowed the food to be served to the other. The more he mulled over it, the more miserable he felt. Unable to restrain himself he approached the master and complained to him about being discriminated against. The master told him that from the next day onwards he would also be served food, the same food, the condition being that he would have to observe a vow of silence consecutively for three days. The next day the cook placed similar bowls of food before each of the monks. Since the monk who had had no food the previous day was feeling extremely hungry, he immediately dipped his hand into the bowl and helped himself with a big chunk of its contents. As he started munching it, he stopped in utter torment with burning all over his mouth and water oozing out of his eyes. Looking into the bowl he found that it contained strong boiled green chillies with a sprinkling of salt. He then cast a glance at the other monk. He found him eating the same green chillies with gusto, relishing every bite of them. Since as per his master's instructions he had to keep



his mouth shut, he could not ask him as to how he was relishing the horrible food. He had no way out except to suffer silently going almost without food—the green chillies he could not stand—for three days. After these days he walked over to the other monk and asked him as to how he could relish such a nasty food. Well, that is my nature, said the other monk. According to Indian thinkers what is needed is to develop a particular kind of temperament for enduring suffering so that one may say, well, that is my nature. This requires transformation of the thinking from the negative to the positive. So long as negative thoughts overpower us, there is suffering, misery, sorrow and pain. With the attitudinal change through a well-defined regimen of control of senses and the mind through *dhyāna* and *samādhi*, concentration and meditation, suffering would cease to be so. Not that suffering would disappear, its feeling certainly would.

It is that which impels a person to help others in distress by courting all that, which may appear to others as suffering. When a person jumps into swirling waters of a swollen river to save a drowning person by risking his own life, he is impelled by this very desire. The suffering that he undergoes is no suffering for him. It gives him a sense of fulfilment, joy and contentment.

There is a classic case of an elderly person failing in health striving the whole day much to his personal discomfort and unease to earn more money, though well-to-do otherwise to take care of his needs and comforts, just to help others. In the dead of the night in chilling Delhi winter he would venture out in his car with a load of blankets and cover the hapless persons wrapped in cotton cloth huddled under a road bridge, they even not realizing who their benefactor was. It is a case here of courting suffering to relieve suffering. This suffering courted by oneself for a noble cause is no suffering. It is *ānanda*, joy and thrill, instead. And that is the core of Indian thinking. It is this which prompts Dhanvantari, the master physician to proclaim :

*na tv ahaṁ kāmāye rājyaṁ no bhogān no sukhāni ca  
kāmāye duḥkhataptānāṁ prāṇinān ārtināśanam*



"I covet not kingdom, nor enjoyments, nor pleasures. What I covet is to remove the pain of the suffering humanity."

Suffering can broadly be divided in two types, one caused by man and the other caused by nature. The former is based on deceit, falsehood, chicanery, greed, hatred, revenge and all other baser instincts. The latter is caused by natural phenomena like earthquake, floods, typhoon, cloudburst, drought, famine and so on. While the former can be checked by corrective measures as enunciated in sacred texts to a large extent, the others cannot be, man having no control over them. While the sweep of the latter is much wider, the whole populations getting affected thereby, the former is comparatively limited in its reach except wars and battles which involve large sections of people by inflicting on them death and destruction. The same also is the case with major accidents like the Bhopal Gas tragedy or the Chernobyl Atomic leak, which affected hundreds and thousands of people impairing their eyesight causing them physical disorders permanently.

There are people, very strange indeed, who are driven by the instinct of sadism in casuing suffering and misery to people. They derive joy and satisfaction from inflicting pain, physical and mental, to others. There may be others who may not be instinctively so bad but who turn into cruel beasts under the indoctrination of a particular ideology or under the impact of religious fervour. They indulge in wanton loot, rape and murder of innocent people, were it to serve their misconceived mission.

There have been prayers since the time of the Vedas for peace in the universe. The Vedic seer prays :

*om dyauh śāntiḥ, antarikṣam śāntiḥ, prthivī śāntiḥ, āpaḥ śāntiḥ, oṣadhayaḥ śāntiḥ, vanaspatayaḥ śāntiḥ śāntir eva śāntiḥ.*

"May there be peace in the outer region, peace in the mid-region, peace on the earth, peace in waters, peace in herbs, peace in plants and trees, peace and peace everywhere."

It is interesting that the Indian mind has not stopped short of accepting the inexorability of suffering which one may have incurred through bad actions of previous births, it has moved on to accept remedies for mitigating, if not eliminating, its



impact in the form of wearing special stones, visiting holy places, meeting holy people (*sādhusaṅga*) and listening to their discourses, chanting holy *mantras*, conducting life according to Śāstric precepts, observing fasts and austerities, giving liberal gifts to Brāhmaṇas and engaging in acts of charity like constructing ponds, organizing community kitchens, planting trees, helping Pāṭhaśālās, (schools) through cash and kind, organizing *yajñas*, sacrifices and so on. Belief in astrology being very strong in India, suffering and distress could be foretold on the basis of a particular stellar combination in horoscope and special prayers offered to propitiate malevolent planets apart from wearing special stones or sanctified amulets.

Suffering can further be divided in two types : one, suffering inflicted by others, two, suffering inflicted by one on one's own self. The second is epitomized in *tapas*, penance and is indulged in order to cleanse oneself of impurities. This is a special feature of the monastic orders, the Sannyasins in the Hindu fold and the Munis and Bhikkhus in the Jain and Buddhist folds. This comprises scanty dress, one *dhoti*, loose cloth as lower garment and one loose cloth as upper garment, for all weathers even in biting cold or no garment at all, the Hindus have their Nāga Sadhus, and the Jains their Digambara Munis, eating only one meal a day, having no possessions and no fixed place of stay or walking barefoot for long distances even under the most trying weather conditions. This may be stretched to fasting for certain days or subsisting on a particular type of diet only, only on milk, only on yogurt, only on fruits and so on or on alms provided by householders, whatever their quantity and content. If in the alms the mendicant gets different food items, he is not allowed by the discipline of his order to taste them individually; he has to mix up all of them so that he does not cultivate taste for any particular item. The Jain monks even pull their hair as part of their austerities. There is a regular ceremony for this called the *keśalonich*, the pulling of the hair. The Hindu scriptures record austerities like standing on one foot for long hours, standing in water neck-deep, fixing the gaze on the sun (vide Kālidāsa : *sūryasaniṣṭadṛṣṭih*). The austerities are not unoften carried to bizarre lengths. This self-inflicted suffering indulged



in self-purification, as pointed out above, does not mean any suffering to the performers of the austerities, rather it provides them with indescribable spiritual satisfaction and fulfilment with the purging off of all that is vile (the *kaṣāyas*) in them. This type of self - inflicted suffering ; actually it is a misnomer to call it suffering, though to an observer it may look to be so stands in a category in itself in that though it may have an appearance of suffering, it is no suffering at all.

It is to avoid the other type of suffering that the thinkers, philosophers and masters (*ācāryas*) have indicated certain paths. One of these is the path of Bhakti, the path of devotion. The other is the path of Aṣṭāṅgayoga, the eightfold Yoga. Still another is the path of Vedānta and yet still another is that of Jainism and Buddhism. All these have at their core the annihilation of ego. In the path of Bhakti the devotee surrenders himself unto his favourite deity (the *lṣṭadevatā*). All that he wants for himself is His grace. In this he forgets himself and gets totally engrossed in Him. The world outside does not exist for him nor do exist any pain or sorrow. He may be a physical weakling ; he would just not care for his bodily pain with all the solace he would find in chanting His name. That is what matters for him. The path of Vedānta makes him realize that the entire empirical existence is nothing but illusion (*māyā*) caused by nescience (*avidyā*). Striving for true knowledge he rises above mundane considerations and realizes the identity of the individual soul (*jīvātman*) with the supreme one (*paramātman*). According to Vedāntic teaching suffering pertains to body only; the soul remaining completely untouched with it. The body consisting of five elements, the *pañca-bhūtas*, the earth, the water, the fire, the air and the space is subject to pain and pleasure, the soul remaining immune to either of them. The soul will go on assuming bodies till lasts the attachment with actions. It is the attachment, which is the root cause of bondage of the soul with the body and its need to take on one. Till the actions continue to be performed with an element of desire, so long the soul will continue to encumber itself with the body. Death does not mean the extinction of body as such, it only means, if the desire persists, the extinction of one body



only, for, as soon as one body is extinct, there will be another one ready for the soul to enter into it. The Upaniṣad explains it graphically with the example of a grasshopper, the *lūtā*. As soon as the grasshopper reaches the edge of one blade of grass, it jumps on to the other blade and so goes on the process. The reward of each and every action performed has got to be reaped, if it is performed with a motive. Till one attains the state of performing actions without desire for their fruit accruing to oneself, the process would continue. Hence the need to forego desire, the *kāma* and to perform actions without it, *niṣkāma*. That is real renunciation, the *karmaphalanyāsa*, as the *Gītā* describes it.

The ego in the individual, the I-ness is the delimiting phenomenon that does not allow him to become one with the limitless. This is explained through a very interesting narrative in the *Yogavāsiṣṭha*, a Sanskrit text on Advaita *par excellence*. A king named Śikhidhvaja overpowered by the spirit of renunciation leaves his kingdom one night when every one, including his wife Cūḍālā, is asleep and goes to a forest to practice penance. In the forest he moves on and on till he reaches a place where he does not find trace of a human being. A river flows nearby it. He decides to settle there. With leaves and grass he makes a hut for himself and fashions a bowl (*kamaṇḍalu*) out of the forest wood to fetch water from the river. For his food he has fruits and roots growing around. With this he starts practicing penance. His wife not finding him in the palace the next morning starts ruling over the kingdom in his absence. Twelve long years pass by. Finding through her divine vision—she was a realized soul—that her husband was still not on the right track, she assumes the form of a young lad of the name of Kumbha and reaches the very place where her husband had been practicing penance. Finding a young lad in the region where no human being had set foot over the past twelve years, the king was all surprise. On a query from the lad he told him that he had renounced his kingdom and had nothing with him at that time except his hut. The lad told him smilingly: O it is your hut! You have something, which you call you own. What have you renounced then? The king realized his mistake



and after destroying the hut said, well, the hut is gone. I have with me only my water bowl. "My water bowl", exclaimed the lad, "you have something, which you call your own, what have you renounced then"? The king realizing his mistake went to the river and threw the bowl therein and coming back to the lad said, well, even the bowl is gone. Now I have only my body with me. Your body, said the lad, it means you still have some possession. What have you renounced then? Well, I will destroy this too, said the king. And saying this he went up a cliff and as he was to jump from it, the lad pulled him back, the king turning back not finding the lad but his wife Cūḍālā telling him that she had adopted the stratagem to bring him to the right path. It is not things that he has to give up but the attachment to them. And, if he has done that, he can still rule over the kingdom and still not be involved in it. And that really is renunciation. And it is this renunciation, which is a sure path to liberation, mokṣa. With this spirit of detachment one can attain salvation even when alive, the Jīvanmukti or the Videhamukti, having the body but not having the feeling for it. It is this realization that had led the great knower of Brahman, Brahmajñānin, King Janaka to proclaim when informed that his capital city of Mithilā had caught fire that had left him totally unperturbed in the midst of flurry of all the activities that as the chief administrator he had been called upon to perform. He had expressed himself in words which sum up the essence of a realized soul and which have become so famous now in the Sanskrit world :

*mithilāyām pradīptāyām na me dahyati kiñcana.*

"Even when Mithilā is on fire there is nothing mine which is getting burnt."

To him, the realized one, the wordly feelings of pleasure and pain touch not. Knower of Brahman, he turns into Brahman itself: *Brahma vid Brahmaiva bhavati*. Having realized the oneness with the Supreme Reality what sorrow and delusion could he have, *tatra ko mohaḥ kaḥ śokaḥ ekatvam anupaśyataḥ*. This is best illustrated in the words of the same Janaka :

*api me dakṣiṇām bāhuṃ candanena samarcayet*



"If one were to anoint my right arm with sandalwood paste and sever the left with an axe, both would mean the same to me."

Detachment, therefore, is the key to the removal of suffering.

Patañjali, the author of the *Yogasūtra* accepts wrong knowledge, *avidyā*, as the root cause of wordly existence. *Avidyā* is to accept the transitory as permanent, to look upon the impure body as pure and so on. With this feeling one develops attachment, *rāga*, to objects the non-attainment of which leads to hostility, *dveṣa*. Apart from this there is another reason for suffering, which is the development of the sense of belonging, *asmitā*, of the body to one's own self or to other objects. It is this sense of belonging, *asmitā*, which is at the basis of all suffering, *kleśa*. One, therefore, has to outgrow this. This one can do, according to the Yoga Darśana by means first of *tapas*, penance, *svādhyāya*, the study of the scriptures and *Īśvarapraṇidhāna*, concentration on the Lord, and then by practicing the eightfold *Yoga*, the *astāṅgayoga* comprising *yamas*, the ten moral observances and the *niyamas*, the lesser moral vows.

The Buddha preached for the annihilation of birth, death, disease and old age which he considered as a consequence of attachment.

Mahāvīra, the Jain Tīrthaṅkara, believed that even the causes of suffering are also suffering and preached for their annihilation. Just as a duck comes out of an egg and an egg comes out of a duck, in the same way desire comes out of attachment and attachment comes out of desire. Agreeable look, word, smell, taste, touch and feeling give rise to liking (*rāga*) while the disagreeable ones of them to revulsion (*dveṣa*). One tends to get involved with the agreeable ones and abhors the disagreeable ones. One not satisfied with the agreeable ones, wants to have more and more of them. That is *parigraha*. Not being able to obtain all that he wants for himself, he indulges in theft, smuggling and hoarding. Under the influence of desire he develops greed and loses his peace of mind suffering frequent bouts of depression. The more he tries to fulfill his desires, the more miserable he feels. The spirit of violence overtakes him. He becomes subject to anger, wrath, revenge



and pride. He engages himself in all sorts of activities. Now, where there are activities, there is the *samsāra*, the worldly existence, where there is *samsāra*, there is birth, death, old age and disease. And where all these are there, there is suffering. According to Mahāvīra all these, word smell, form, taste and touch are neither agreeable nor disagreeable, neither good, nor bad. They are merely the sources of agreeableness and disagreeableness. The root cause of them, the agreeableness and disagreeableness, are liking and disliking, *rāga* and *dveṣa*. One who controls liking, develops indifference. His desire subsides. With detachment the self - same objects generate neither agreeability nor disagreeability. Where there is no attachment there is no worry. Where there is no worry, there is peace. Where there is peace, there is salvation.

Peace is when the dualities, ailments, physical and mental, come to an end. When the root cause of dualities, action, ceases, the suffering stops.

Said Lord Buddha : Devoid of longing for desires and the longing for the wordly objects, a being is not born again. With the control of longing, the root cause of worldly existence ceases to exist. With the extinction of the worldly existence, there is no birth. With no birth, there is no old age, no death, no grieving, and no suffering.

Different thinkers in India have tried to find ways to eradicate suffering, the root cause of misery in this world, each in his own way. By following their teachings one can hope to be free from suffering, *duḥkha* and attain bliss, *sukha*. The bodily fluctuations would not bother him then. Remaining in this world, he will be above it; he will continue performing actions with no taint of them, *na karma lipyate*, with no reward, good or bad, to be reaped of them. He will be truly a delivered being, delivered from the bondage of assumption of births to reap the reward of his actions. From the individual he will pass on to the cosmic existence.



## Ethics in Christianity and Hinduism

Christianity lays great emphasis on ethics. The bases for ethics are mercy, justice, amity, forgiveness, humility and self-sacrifice. These lead a person to go in for good qualities and keep away from bad ones.

Lord Christ spoke of loving thy neighbour as thyself. He advised against facing evil with evil. His core teaching was compassion. Nothing like relieving pain of others.

Hinduism too is equally emphatic about ethics. The very definition of Dharma in it is nothing but an elaboration of ethical principles. The five characteristics of it which Manu has enumerated in his attempt to explain it (Dharma) and which he enjoins on every member of society are: Non-injury to others, truthfulness, non-stealing, purity and self-control.

In christianity man is considered an image of God. Yet he is free in his will and actions. If there are good thoughts in him he has in him evil thoughts too. He can become holy or a sinner as per his actions. Jesus warned his disciples not to become sinners by emphasizing upon them not to do evil deeds. Man can earn the mercy and grace of God by love, dedication and complete surrender to him and by following the path of self-less service.

The same thing the Upaniṣad propounds. There is nothing superior to man: न मानुषादुच्चतरं हि किञ्चित् lit declares. The complete surrender to God which is the cardinal principle of Christianity is also the cardinal principle of Hinduism. The *Gītā* declares:

यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासियत्।  
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम्॥

O Arjuna! Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in sacrifice, whatever you give in charity and whatever you practise by way of austerities you surrender unto me. *Prapatti* which means शरणागति to the will of God is what is em-



phasized time and again in Hindu scriptures.

Great importance is given to charity in Christianity. To avoid ego creeping in, complete anonymity or confidentiality is emphasized in the act of giving. It is said that charity should be given in such a way that the left hand may not know what the right hand has given. One should not only give but give liberally even if he were to be your enemy. Unlike the principle of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth lord Jesus says 'if some one sues you in the court and takes away your coat give him your cloak also.'

Hinduism is not behind Christianity in extolling the virtue of charity. There are countless references in ancient Sanskrit literature where this virtue is extolled. There is no better proof of the value attached to it than the trisyllabic Sanskrit word *arāti* 'the enemy' which literally means non-giver. One can easily appreciate the spirit behind the transformation of the original sense of the word of non-giving to the conventional one of that of an enemy. One who does not give : *नस्ति रत्तिर्दत्तं* यस्य सोऽरातिः was, is an enemy of society. The charity or *dāna* was not actuated by the spirit of pity on the supplicant but by that of favour bestowed on the giver. In the *Svapnavāsavadatta* of Bhāsa when the Chamberlain announces the wish of the princess of Magadha to give something in charity he says that she is having this wish which could be a favour to her leading to, as she would think, her own upliftment : *आत्मानुग्रहमिच्छतीह नृपजा कस्याद्य किं दीयताम्*. Confidentiality in charity goes well with Hinduism too where it is said that the fame (of the giver) goes down be mention of it *कीर्तिर्हसति कीर्तनात्*.

The Christian morality centres round the concept of love. St. John says "God is Love" (First Epistle of St John 4.8). In his First Epistle he writes : we should love another because love is from God and whoever loves—he is born because God and known God. Who does not love does not know God because God is love....who remains in love, God remains in him. And his love is proven in us. There is no fear in love; rather, fulfilled love throws out fear because fear gives pain. And one who fears has not been fulfilled in love. If some one says that he loves God but bears animosity to his brother then he is a liar



because he does not love his brother whom he has seen, then he cannot love God whom he not seen. In the Bible the fundamental instruction about morality has been presented in the following words:

*Love your God with the whole heart, your whole soul,  
your whole intellect.*

There is deep kinship between the above Christian teaching and the Hindu teaching. Hinduism too enjoins upon its followers love and fellow-feeling. It does not restrict the same to thy neighbour only, not only to human beings only, but extends it to all beings सर्वभूतदया. He has the right vision it, is said who looks upon all beings as one's own self : आत्मवत् सर्वभूतानि यः पश्यति स पश्यति.. It clearly enunciates that one should not do to others what one feels harmful to oneself:

आत्मनः प्रतिकूलानि परेषां न समाचरेत्

As a matter of fact, the consideration of somebody being one's own and the other someone else, it considers a thinking of the lesser minds. For those with broader vision the whole earth is (one) family:

अयं निजः परो वेति गणना लभ्य चेतसाम्।  
उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्॥

They would not stand the sight of some one in distress. A Hindu prays along with his own well-being, progress and prosperity for the well-being, progress and prosperity of all:

सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः सर्वे सन्तु निरामयः।  
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु मा कश्चिद्दुःखभाग् भवेत्॥

"May all be happy, may all be free from disease, may all experience good things, may no one come to grief."

When some one else is accepted as one's own self there is no propensity to deprive him of his possession. 'Thou shall not steal' is the Christian commandment. *Asteya* 'do not steal' is Manu's commandment.

God is all merciful in Christianity. So is He in Hinduism. He is *Karuṇāvaruṇālaya*, the ocean of compassion.

There is great emphasis in Christianity on the concept of forgiveness, that which is conveyed by the word *Kṣamā* in



Hinduism. According to the Gospel of Luke Christ while teaching his disciples about goodness said, "Love your enemies, whoever bears animosity towards you do good to him. Whoever curses you bless him. Whoever insults you pray for him..... and you, do to others as you want them to do to you (compare: आत्मनः प्रतिकूलानि परेषां न समाचरेत् .If you do good to only those who are good to you than what is your goodness? Because sinners also do the same. Just as your Father is merciful, so also you be kind. Do not apportion blame ..... if you forgive, you will also be forgiven."

The same idea Hindu texts echo :

उपकारिणी यः साधुः साधुत्वे तस्य को गुणः।

अपकारिणि यः साधुः स साधुः सद्विरुध्यते॥

"One who does good to him who has done him good, what special is it about him? One who does good (even) to him who has done him harm, he really is proclaimed as good by the wise."

As for not apportioning blame or speaking ill of others a well-known Sanskrit *Subhāṣita* says :

यदीच्छसि वशं कर्तुं जगदेकेन कर्मणा।

परापवादसस्येभ्यो गां चरन्तीं निवारय॥

"Should you wish to bring the whole world round you in one stroke, restrain the cow, viz. your speech, in grazing the corn of others in the form of speaking ill of them".

There are numerous passages in old Indian literature where the virtues of forgiveness are eulogized. Not to punish when one is in a position to do so and to forgive is the highest form of self-restraint which is spiritually elevating. Among the Jains there is a special occasion called *Kṣamāvaṇīparva* when each member of the Community asks forgiveness of others for offences he/she might have committed knowingly or unknowingly. Atonement '*prāyaścitta*' the Hindu scriptures prescribe as an unfailing antidote for even some of the heinous crimes committed by a person except the one of ungratefulness :

गोहने चैव सुरापे च चौरं मग्नव्रते तथा।

सर्वस्य निष्कृतिः प्रोक्ता कृतघ्ने नास्ति निष्कृतिः॥

"There is atonement for everybody—the killer of a cow, a



drunkard, a thief and one who has broken the vow he had undertaken but not for one who is ungrateful."

A look at the Ten Commandments reveals that most of them are in spirit the same as in Hinduism. The Fifth Commandment says 'Honour Your mother'. The Upaniṣad says ; मातृदेवा भव, पितृदेवो भव 'revere your mother as a deity 'revere your father as a deity'. The Sixth Commandment says 'You shall not murder'. This is intended to mean not only not murdering but also causing no injury ; physical , mental or verbal to living beings. This is nothing but the *Ahimsā* of Hinduism the supreme virtue as proclaimed by the *Mahābhārata* : *ahimsā paramo dharmaḥ*. 'You shall not commit adultery' is the Seventh Commandment. This is what Manu means by *indriyanigraha*, the control of the senses. The Eighth Commandment is 'You shall not steal'. This is what is *aṣṭeya* as pointed out earlier. The Ninth commandment is 'You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour'. This emphasizes the virtue of truthfulness in effect which is enunciated by the *Mahābhārata* in three words सत्यमेव जयते, truth alone triumphs which have been adopted as national motto in India. There is great store laid by *satya* or truth in Hindu scriptures. the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmiki proclaiming it to be more important than even a thousand horse sacrifices, Aśvamedhas:

अश्वमेध सत्यमेव जयते, सहस्रं च सत्यं च तुलया धृतम्।  
अश्वमेधसहस्राद्धि सत्यमेव विशिष्यते॥

"If a thousand Aśvamedhas, horse sacrifices, were to be put in one scale and truth on the other, it will be truth which will weigh heavier than a thousand Aśvamedhas."

The Tenth and the last Commandment says "You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbour. The *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad* says in a strikingly similar tenor : मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम् "Do not covet some one else's wealth."

From what has been said above it should be clear that there is considerable and substantial similarity in ethical principles in the principal religions of the world, Christianity and Hinduism which under scores the necessity of the times to bring their adherents still closer to each other for the immense good of the humanity at large.



## National Integration in a Multireligious Society: A Study in Indian Perspective

The English word religion is generally rendered by the word Dharma in Indian languages. It is necessary first of all to grasp its fuller significance. A combination of two elements, *dhṛ* and the suffix *man* it means 'that which sustains'. Rightly has it been said about it in ancient texts: *dharmo dhārayate prajāḥ*,<sup>1</sup> Dharma is what holds together people or holds together society. When we talk of integration, we mean precisely this, what is integration if not holding together of people.

It would be natural to pass on from this to the question as to what religion or *dharma* is. Since times immorial this question has been posed and attempted to be answered. After having repeatedly exhorted people to follow Dhamma or Dharma emperor Aśoka could not but proceed to explain it realizing full well the inquisitiveness that the repeated word may generate among people. He posed the question: *kiyaṃ cu dhammeti*, what is Dharma. His answer to this is : *apāsinave, dayā, dāne, sace, socaye, sādhave, mādave*,<sup>2</sup> it is mercy, charity, truthfulness, purity, goodness and politeness. Looking at this definition of emperor Aśoka authorities like Radha Kumud Mookerji have pointed out that Aśoka's Dhamma is a common property of all religions. No religion would expect of its adherents not to inculcate the above virtues.

Much earlier than Aśoka, the *Manusmṛti*, the age-old Dharmasāstra text attempted a similar definition of Dharma. The relevant stanza therein reads:

*ahimsā satyam asteyam śaucam indriyanigrahaḥ  
etat sāmāsikam prāhuḥ sāksād dharmasya lakṣaṇam*<sup>3</sup>

"Non-injury to beings, truthfulness, nonstealing, purity, self-control-- this in nutshell is the definition of Dharma."



As we can see, it differs little if at all from the Aśokan definition of Dharma.

What is said in the *Mansmṛti* of the Hindus and the inscription of the Buddhist Aśoka is said in the Bible of the Christians. Treat thy neighbour as thyself, thou shall not steal and so on. The Qoran of the Muslims, Guru Granth Sahib of Sikhs also say the same thing.

The essential of all religions beings the same, if their adherents were only to grasp it, much of the religious conflict in the world would disappear.

Every religion has a set of its rituals, doctrines and dogmas and a whole set of appurtenances which serve more often than not in clouding the essential unity of them, boggling the people down in them and confusing them into stepping from the essential to the nonessentials.

Recounting a personal experience may bring home the point much better. Some time after the writer of these lines had his Sanskrit epic on the life and the teachings of Guru Gobind Singh published, a Sikh friend of his in the Department of Italian in the University of Delhi asked him as how he could write the work. 'Through the grace of the Guru,' was his reply. 'You are a true sikh,' said the sikh friend. Any one who says 'through the grace of the Guru' has grasped the true significance of Sikhism. We people only sport beards and long hair. He was to a certain extent right. Sikhism is a spirit, it is a philosophy of life. It would be doing injustice to it to confine it only to externals just as it would be doing injustice to Hinduism to confine it to the stratification of society or to idle worship. When we visualize religion as the integrating force we visualize it as an entity transforming a man from a basic animal that he is into a human being. If he is a man already then turning him into a better man.

The basic purpose of religion is to satisfy spiritual needs of a person. Man has always been in quest of peace and happiness which materialism even at its height has failed to provide him. He turns to religion to discover them and it is not unoften that he finds them. Had it not been so, religion as a force would have long ceased to exist.



The very fact that religion enables a man to discover oneness among all beings serves to draw them closer. This is clearly noticeable in the followers of a particular religion. If the realization were to be extended to the followers of other religions, then even the followers of different religions could also be drawn together. To make man a better man being the common aim of all religions they could only be counted as different paths for the realization of the common goal. Wherever this realization has dawned, multiplicity of religions has caused no problems in living together in peace and amity of their followers.

If the people were to follow the same set of values, it is understandable as to how they should come into conflict with each other. Brotherhood and non-injury to fellow beings being the kernel of it, no true religion would admit bigotry and intolerance. It should be left to people to decide for themselves as to which path in their spiritual upliftment would suit them the most. The use of force in making them adopt a particular path should simply be unnecessary and undesirable. What Aśoka had said in the case of different sects is double true in the case of different religions :

yo hi koci ātapaśaṇḍaṁ pūjayati  
parapāśaṇḍaṁ ca garahati savaṁ atpapaśaṇḍabhatīā  
kimti ātapaśaṇḍaṁ dipayema iti so ca puna tathā  
karato ātapaśaṇḍaṁ bāḍhataram pahanāti ta  
samavāyo eva sādhu.

“Whosoever glorifies his sect and disparages the other’s sect in the belief that he is thereby serving the cause of his sect, he by so doing injures the other sect but more than that he injures his own sect. So concordance is what i good.”

Ensnared in this spirit religion would lead to the same spirit subsisting in all beings which undoubtedly is pre-requisite of all types of integration, national or international.

Culture of a country is determined by its history, geography and the complexion of its population. This holds good in the case of India as well which is populated by many races. Four of these were identified in the pre-historic age itself: the Aryans, the Dravidians, the Austroloids and the Mongoloids. To



these were added quite a large number through immigration principally through the North-West. Foreigners flocked to India in successive waves in search of pastures anew. As for languages, there are twenty two major ones which are spoken in India at present with countless off-shoots. All this has resulted in the evolution in India of a psychology which is of the accepting type. Since India did not go in for exclusivism throughout its long march through history, it did not go in for intolerance and fanaticism either. It developed instead breadth of outlook, catholicity of approach and width of perspective. That is the typical Indian ethos which got its full articulation through a long line of Indian seers and sages, thinkers and philosophers. They could see through unity in the midst of all this diversity. There is only one reality which is given different names, said they: *ekam sad viprā bahudhā vadanti*.<sup>5</sup> Each living being has the same soul residing in him and therefore there is no question of any dissention among creatures in the ultimate analysis. Declares the *Gītā* :

*vidyavinayasampanne brāhmaṇe gavi hastini  
śuni caiva śvapāke ca paṇḍitāḥ samadarśināḥ*<sup>6</sup>

The wise look upon a learned and modest Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog and an outcast as they are one and the same.

This outlook did not make the Indians limit themselves to their tiny village, their town, their city and even their vast country. They could go beyond them and look upon the whole earth as their mother. The *Atharvaveda* seer calls himself the son of the earth: *mātā bhūmih putro aham prthivyāḥ*,<sup>7</sup> "I am the son of the earth. The earth is my mother. "That is the true international spirit, manifest not in a work of today when there is so much of talk of fostering of international outlook but in a work thousands of years old! To the Indians the whole universe is a nest which they inhabit: *yatra viśvam bhavaty ekanīdam*.<sup>8</sup> Little wonder then that there was no aggression against any country on the part of Indians, no attempt to annex territories.

Whenever there was any conquest, it was only the cultural one. This can well be illustrated with reference to the Southeast Asia and the Far East. Indian culture spread in these Continents but never through the sword arm. Except for one solitary



instance of Rājārāja Chola sending a naval expedition against Indonesia there was never any attempt for the past two to three thousand years at military conquest.

It was their catholicity of outlook which made the Indians look upon the pain and suffering of others as their own. A physician in India does not aspire for himself a kingdom, the things of enjoyment or happiness, he aspires only to be able to remove the suffering of the tormented living beings:

*na tv ahaṁ kāmāye rājyaṁ na svargaṁ nāpunarbhavam  
kāmāye duḥkhataptānāṁ prāṇināṁ ārtināśanam* <sup>9</sup>

An Indian considers doing good to others a meritorious act and tormenting others as a vicious one :

*paropakāraḥ puṇyāya pāpāya parapīḍanam*<sup>10</sup>

In the eighteen Purāṇas Vyāsa has said only two things: to do good to others is good. To cause suffering to them or torment them leads to sin.

Some of the misguided Western scholars have charged Indians with being a little too much individualistic. Nothing can be farther from truth. There are countless references in Indian literature which emphasize corporate life. If one has wealth it is not for the use of oneself only: *paropakārāya satām vibhūta-yaḥ*,<sup>11</sup> 'the riches of the noble are for the good of others.' A miser who does not share his wealth with others is an object of pity. The Sanskrit word for him is *kṛpaṇa* which literally means, 'one who is pitiable'. In Indian kitchens food is cooked not for one's own consumption only but for others as well: The *Gītā* emphatically declares: *bhuñjate te tv ahaṁ pāpā ye pacanty ātmakāraṇāt* <sup>12</sup> "those who cook for themselves alone, eat sin alone." The Mother Earth yields resources for all of its sons and not for the chosen few :

*bhumir dadāti sarvebhyaḥ putrebho śyāḥ dhanam samam*

There has been emphasis in India on peace since times immemorial : *Om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ* . There is a full Mantra in which peace is invoked from the sky, the earth and all other elements. India's thrust for peace which is very much in evidence now is rooted in its culture. Mutual tolerance, accommodation, peaceful co-existence are the hallmark of Indian culture. They could



not have found better expression than in the following Vedic Mantra:

*sangacchadhvaṁ samvadadhvaṁ sam vo manāṁsi jānatām*

*samāni va ākutih samānā hṛdayāni vaḥ*

*samānam astu vo mano yathā vaḥ susahāsati*<sup>13</sup>

“May you walk in step. May you speak in unison. May your minds think alike. May your minds act together for the good of all of you.”

### References

1. *Mahābhārata*, Karṇaparvan, 69.58; *Rāmāyaṇa*, VII. 59.7-8.
2. Delhi Topra Pillar Inscription, line 12.
3. 10.63.
4. Girnar Rock Edict No. 12, lines 5-6.
5. *Ṛgveda*, 1.164.4.
6. 5.18.
7. 12.1.12.
8. *Atharvaveda*, 2.1.1.
9. A well known stanza in Sanskrit circles but its source is not traceable.
10. *Pañcatantra*, 3 (kākolūkīyam), 101.
11. *Nitiśataka*, 66
12. 3.13.
13. *Ṛgveda*, 10.191.2..



## Secular Concepts in World Religions in the Light of Hinduism

Every world region has its own set of rites and rituals. Behind these lies the basic objective of spiritual and moral upliftment of individuals and society. The rites and rituals aiming at purification of the self are but one means for achieving this objective. The other means are the renunciation of the ego and identification with other beings and meeting out the treatment to them that an individual would like to be meted out to him. An old Sanskrit stanza explains it in very simplistic terms:

*śrūyatām dharmasarvasvaṁ śrutvā caivāvadhāryatam |  
ātmanaḥ pratikūlāni pareṣāṁ na samācareṭ |*

“Listen to the essence of Dharma and after listening it keep it firmly in mind. Do not do to others what is offensive to you.”

That is Dharma, not the Hindu Dharma, the Buddhist Dharma or Islam or Christianity but just the Dharma.

Emperor Aśoka in his Rock and Pillar Edicts exhorts his people repeatedly to take to Dharma. He tells them that he has appointed Dharmamahāmātras, the Ministers of Religious Affairs. He expresses his happiness that the sound of Dharma is audible in his empire in the same manner as is the sound of a drum: *aho dhmmaghoso aho bherighoso*. After having spoken so much about Dharma, he proceeds in an edict to explain as to what this Dharma is. He first puts the poser: *kiyaṁ cu dhammeti*, What is Dharma. He then proceeds to answer it by expounding it. According to him it is: *dayā dāne sace socaye sādhave mādave*, compassion, charity, truth, purity, goodness and politeness. Now, these concepts are not peculiar to Buddhism alone. Manu definition of Dharma also has them:

*dhrtiḥ kṣamā damo 'steyaṁ śaucam indriyanigrahaḥ |  
dhī vidyā satyaṁ akrodho daśakam dharmalakṣaṇam ||*



"Contentment, forgiveness or forbearance, self-control, abstention from unrighteously appropriating something, purity, control of senses, knowledge (of the Supreme Soul), truthfulness and abstention from anger are the ten marks of Dharma."

At another place he reduces these ten to four and adds to these one, *ahimsā*, nonviolence or non-injury to beings which he enjoins for the members of all the four castes:

*ahimsā satyam asteyam śaucaṁ indriyanigrahaḥ  
etaṁ sāmāsikam dharmam cāturvarṇye 'bravīṁ manuḥ*||

According to the *Agnipurāṇa* non-violence, sweet and agreeable speech, truth, purity, compassion and fortitude constitute the common Dharma both for the recluse and the general public.

The welfare of all beings is the core principle of each religion. Hinduism is no exception to it. A Sanskrit prayer sums it up beautifully:

*sarve bhavantu sukhinah sarve santu nirāmayāḥ  
sarve bhadrānpaśyantu ma kaścid duḥkhabhāg bhavett*||

"May all be happy, may they be free from disease, may they see (= come across) good things, may no one among them meet with unhappiness."

Apart from the *yajñas*, the sacrifices performed for the fulfilment of certain individual desires, they were performed for the welfare and wellbeing of all living beings as also to ward off the possibility of any evil befalling them. The great Indian poet Kālidāsa describes King Dilipa milking the earth for sacrifices and God Indra milking the heaven for crops (on the earth). Each one helped the other so that the worlds could be sustained:

*dudoha gāṁsa yajñāya sasyāya maghavādivam  
sampadviniṁmayenobhau dadhatur bhuvanadvayam*||

"He drained the earth (= collected taxes from) the earth for performance of sacrifices while Indra drained the heaven (= brought forth rain from there) (for the growth) of crops; thus with the exchange of their wealths they sustained the two worlds".

The same idea the poet expresses in another stanza where



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 through King Dilipa he has the following tribute paid to sage  
 Vasiṣṭha:

*haviṛ āvarjitam hotas tvayā vidhivad agniṣu  
 vṛṣṭir bhavati sasyānām avagrahaviśoṣiṇām||*

“O sacrificer, the oblation duly offered by you in the holy fires  
 turns itself into rain for nourishing the crops, which else would  
 wither away due to drought.”

The *yajñas* or the sacrifices were, as would be clear from  
 the above, meant for bringing the rains so necessary for good  
 harvest, particularly in a country like India which is primarily  
*devamāṛka*, dependent upon rainfall for a good crop. And good  
 rain would come through *yajñas* as prescribed in the sacred  
 texts.

The *yajñas* or sacrifices having the motivation of the wel-  
 fare of society and the whole country as such is noticeable in  
 the Vedic prayer offered after arranging the sacrificial firewood  
 and igniting it:

*ā brahman brāhmaṇo brahmavarcaṣī jāyatām  
 ā rāṣṭre rājnyo śūra iṣavyo 'tivyādhi mahāratho jāyatām dogdhrī  
 dhenur voḍhā 'naḍvān āśuh saptiḥ.....  
 nikāme nikāme naḥ parjanyaḥ varṣatu phalavatyo na  
 oṣadhayaḥ pacyantām yogakṣemo naḥ kalpatām*

“May there be in our land a Brahmin given to performing sac-  
 rifices and engaged in studies, may there be a Kṣatriya who is  
 mahāratha (one who can engage a thousand adversaries in battle  
 singlehandedly) and is a good archer, may there be a cow who  
 is milch, a bull fit enough to carry load, a horse which is fast....  
 May clouds shower forth rain as and when needed, may our  
 fruit-bearing herbs and plants ripen by themselves, may there  
 be for us security of our possessions.”

If all this is not secular, what else it is ? A part of the Vedic  
 ritual, it has nothing sectarian about it. It is central to social  
 wellbeing and welfare without any distinction of any kind.



## अद्वैतवादः

श्राम्नायवन्त्यास्तिकदर्शनानि प्रायेण। वेदान्तदर्शनमेवैकमाम्नायवन्न। सांख्ये तावत्प्रथमः प्रणेता कपिलो महर्षिः श्रूयते, पञ्चशिखादयश्च तच्छिष्यपरम्परायां स्मर्यन्ते। योगे चादिमः प्रवर्तयिता हिरण्यगर्भ इत्याम्नायते। एवमन्यत्रापि दर्शनेषु कापि परम्परीणता दृष्टिपथमुच्छति। वेदान्ते तु महती खलु परम्परा भाष्यकाराणां टीकाकाराणां च स्मर्यते, उपज्ञाताऽऽचार्यस्तु न कापि निर्दिश्यते। कोऽत्र हेतुः स्यात् अयमेवात्र हेतुः प्रतिभाति—उपनिषत्सु तत्र तत्र सन्ति प्रकीर्णान्यद्वैतवादतत्त्वानि द्वैतवादतत्त्वानि च। तत्रेयं भिदाऽधि कारिभेदेनेत्यप्युपगम्योक्तमाधिकारिणां कृतेऽद्वैतपरतया तत्तद्वाक्यानां व्याख्यानं विरोधपरिहारश्चेति ब्रह्मसूत्राणां विषयः प्राधान्येन। अयमेवैषामनन्वादिष्टोऽर्थः। परमतनिराक्रिया त्वानुषङ्गिकी। तस्मात्रात्र किञ्चिन्नूतमुपज्ञातं बादरायणेन यत्प्रेक्षावतां प्रतिपित्सागोचरः स्यात्। एवं सत्यपीदं जिज्ञास्यं नो वैदिकानां किमयमद्वैतवादो मन्त्रकृतामृषीणां कलया साकल्येन वा विदितो बभूवाऽहोस्विन्नेति। बाढं विदित इति दर्शनं नः।

प्रथमं तावत्संश्लेषविशेषं ततोऽभेदं चापि कामयमाना मन्त्रद्रष्टारो दृष्टाः। तद्यथा—  
 "त्वमस्माकं तव स्मसि" [ऋ. 8/92/32] इति। काम्यो हि सर्वस्यावरस्य परेण संसर्गः, अभेदश्च काम्यतर इति स्वसंवेद्योऽर्थः। सर्वो लोको भेदं द्वेष्टि, अभेदं चाभिरुचयति। एकमेव नौ जीवितं द्विधा स्थितं शरीरमिति यथा स्वदते प्रियोक्तिर्न तथा त्वयि प्रिय इति। अत एवाद्या ऋषयोऽपि मानुष्यकमनतिक्रान्ता इत्यभेदं चकमिरेऽग्निना देवेन, इदं च मधुमत्तमं वचो व्याजहिरे—“यदग्ने स्यामहं त्वं त्वं वा घा स्या अहम्। स्युष्टे सत्या इहाशिषः॥” [ऋ. 8/44/23] इति। अयं च तेषा नास्त्यगतिर्मनोरथानामिति दुष्पूरो दुस्तपो दुरापेऽप्यर्थे तर्ष एव केवलो भूदिति मा संस्थाः। तेन तेन देवेन प्रतिबुद्धस्य वामदेवस्य तादात्म्यसम्प्राप्तिं साक्षाच्छ्रूयते—“अहं मनुरभवं सूर्यश्च” [ऋ. 4/26/1] इत्याद्युचि। न केवलमेतदेव, “नेह नानास्ति किञ्चन” [कठो. 04/11] इति। यदुपनिषत्सूच्यते तदेव शब्दान्तरैर्बह्वृ चा अपि व्याहरन्ति—“पुरुष एवेदं सर्वं यद्भू तं यच्च भाव्यम्” [ऋ. 04/90/2] इति। अत्र पुरुषव्यतिरिक्तस्यार्थसन्दोहस्य स्वतन्त्रा सत्ता स्वरूपेणावस्थितिरुपापहृत इति स्पष्टोऽर्थो न प्रयत्नव्याख्येयः। एवं च पुरुषस्य प्रपञ्चेन सहाभेद उक्तो भवति। अपरत्र तत्रैव—“आनीदवातं स्वधया तदेकम्”, “तपसस्तन्महिनाऽजायतैकम्” [ऋ. 10/129/2-3] इति च श्रूयमाणं निरपेक्षं निर्विशेषमलिङ्गं किमपि चैतन्यस्वरूपं तत्त्वमवगमयति। इतरत्रापि [ऋ. 3/55] “महद् देवानामसुरत्वमेकम्” इति प्रत्युचमावर्तते वचः। अत्रापि महान् देवानामसुर एक इत्यनुक्त्वा यदेकमिति नपुंसकं प्रयुक्तं तदपि सामिप्रायमिति च्छन्दस्याम्नातिनः।  
 पुंस्त्वादिविशेषाणांलिङ्गितं तत्तत्त्वमित्यत्रैवाभिप्रायः कवेः।



यजुःषु तु विस्तरेणायमर्थो निगद्यते। ऋग्वेदे पुरुषसूक्ते इदमा सर्वनाम्ना यत्परामृष्टं तदेवात्र व्यक्तीमापाद्याभ्युच्यते—“तदेवाग्निस्तदादित्यस्ताद्वायुस्तदु चन्द्रमाः। तदेव शुक्रं तद् ब्रह्म ता आपः स प्रजापतिः”॥ [शु. यजु. 32/1] इति। तदिति नपुंसकलिङ्गेनालक्षणं निर्विशेषं किमपि परमं तत्त्वं प्रतिपिपादयिषितं सर्वस्याद्वैतवादस्य प्रधानमालम्बनम्। यः खलु सर्वत्रार्थे दृष्टिं चारयित्वा समुपलब्धवस्तुस्वभावः सभ्यदर्शनमुपपन्नः प्रतिबुद्ध स तेनात्मना परेणैक्यमापद्यत इति रुचिरतरं व्यक्ततरं च वेदयन्ति यजूर्षि—“परि द्यावापृथिवी सद्य इत्वा परि लोकान्परि दिशः परि स्वः। ऋतस्य तन्तुं विततं विचृत्य तदपश्यत्तदभवत्तदासीत्॥” [शु. यजु. 32/12] इति। अत्र यजुषि तदभवत्तदासीदिति वाक्ययोरवधानं दीयमानमिच्छामः। इह तावद्भवतिः सत्तामात्रे न वर्तते, अस्तिनैव तदर्थविगतैः पौनरुक्त्यप्रसक्तैः। बाढं केवलो भवतिः सत्तामात्रेऽपि वर्तते निर्बाधम्, अस्ति सहचारोऽस्यार्थान्तरकृत्। यथात्र तथान्यत्रापीदमर्थान्तरमुपलभ्यते। तद्यथा—“यमो वा इदमभूद्यद् वयं स्मः” इति तैत्तिरीयिणः पठन्ति। “या विप्रुष आसंस्ताः शर्करा अभवन्” इति च मैत्रायणीयाः। यथात्र श्रुतिषु तथा प्रकृतेऽपि भवतिर्विकारापत्तौ वर्तते। सेयं विकारापत्तिर्धर्मान्तरोत्पत्तौ सत्यां रूपान्तरापत्तावस्थान्तरापत्तौ वा पर्यवस्यति। इयमेव कारणस्य कार्यभावापत्तिः। यथा लवणमुदकं भवत्युदकसंस्पर्शात्, यथा वाऽऽपो हिमं भवति शैत्यातिशयात्; परं समानप्रकृतिकेष्वेवार्थेषु रूपान्तरापत्तिरूपो विकारो लक्ष्यते नेतरत्र। न जातु घटः पटो भवति। तस्मात्प्रकृतेऽपिः योऽसौ द्रष्टा सोऽसः सन् सोऽभवदिति कथङ्कारमुपपद्येत, यदि द्रष्टृदृष्टादत्यन्ताय भेदः स्यात्। इमां चोन्मिषन्तीमेव शमयति शङ्कामनन्तरोदीरितेन तदासीदिति वाक्येन। अयमर्थः — न ह्यवान्यत्वं किञ्चिदभूद् विकारपत्तिर्वा काचिदजनि। पुरापि दर्शनात् तद्रूपएवासौ द्रष्टाऽवस्थितः। सति दर्शने तु तद्रूपोपलब्धिरेवास्याभूत् तु रूपान्तरं किमप्यभिनवमस्योदभूत्। एवं चात्र कथाञ्चित् तिरस्कृतस्य स्वस्य रूपस्य प्रतिलब्धिः परेणात्मना स्वस्य सारूप्यं चोपन्यस्तं भवति। स्वरूपतिरस्कारश्चाप्यज्ञानकृत इत्यपि तदपश्यदित्यंशेन कटाक्षितं भवति। अन्यत्रापि यजुःषु महतः पुरुषस्य ज्ञानेन ज्ञातुर्माक्ष उक्त उपायान्तरं च पर्युदस्तम्—“तमेव विदित्वाति मृत्युमेति नान्यः पन्था विद्यतेऽयनाय” [शु. यजु. 31/18] इति।

तत्रेदं चिन्त्यते— यदि ज्ञेयोऽन्योऽर्थो ज्ञाता चान्यस्तर्हि कः प्रसङ्गः परस्यार्थस्य ज्ञानमात्रेण कस्यचिदात्यन्तिक ऐकान्तिकश्च दुःखनिर्माक्षः स्यादिति। यदि च तौ परमार्थतोऽभिन्नौ तदा परज्ञानमात्मज्ञानमेव भवतीति सुतरामुपपद्यते वेदार्थः। न ह्यात्मस्वरूपोपलब्धिमन्तरा संसारविरामः संभवति। तस्माद् वेदान्तेषु शब्दोक्तं ब्रह्मात्मनोरैक्यमिहार्थत उक्तं भवतीति न दुर्ग्रहं सुधीभिः।

किञ्च, या नाम वेदान्तेषु ब्रह्मण उपादानकारणता प्रत्यपादि सापीहाऽमुक्तसंशयं ध्वनितचरीति शक्यते वक्तुम्। अभिवदति च यजुः—“तस्मिन्निदं सं च वि चैति सर्वं स ओतः प्रोत्थ विभूः प्रजासु” [32/8] इति। अयमर्थः — सर्वोऽयं प्रपञ्चस्तत एव विभोरात्मनो व्येति व्युच्चरति समुत्तिष्ठत्युद्भवतीति वा। तस्मिन्नेव च समेति, तमेवात्मानमप्येतीति चापि साक्षादुक्तम्। इमौ च प्रभवाप्ययौ वेदान्तेषु प्रसिद्धौ न तावत्प्रसिध्यतो यावद् ब्रह्मण



उपादानता न स्यात्। अत एव तत्प्रसिद्धयेऽनन्तरमेवाह—“स ओतः प्रोतश्च विभूः प्रजासु” इति। कोऽभिसन्धिः—यथा तन्वात्मके पटे तन्तव एव सन्ति। केचिदाधारभूतास्तान्ते, त ओता आ समन्तादुताः सन्तानिता भवन्ति। तदिदं तान इति व्यपदिशन्ति कुविन्दाः। अपरे तेषु सन्तानितेषु प्रोयन्ते प्रोता भवन्ति। तदिदं वानमभिलपन्ति तद्विदः। अत एव प्रवाणसाध नं शलाका प्रवाणीत्युच्यते। यथा तन्तुव्यतिरिक्तः पटो नाम न कश्चिदर्थः, कारणमेव कार्यम्, नामधेयमात्रं विकारः, तथैव प्रकृते ब्रह्माभिन्ना ब्रह्मोपादानाः प्रजा इति निर्गलितोऽर्थः। अप्ययश्चापि ब्रह्मण्युपादानकारणे सत्येव जाघटीति न तु केवले निमित्तकारणे तस्मिन्। न हि घटः कुलालमप्येति। इत्थमुभे अप्यग्यजुषी अद्वैतवादमनुगृह्णाति इत्यपास्तसंशया नन्दन्ति वैदिकाः।

ननु क्षित्यादिकं कर्तृजन्य कार्यत्वाद् घटवदिति ध्वनति नैयायिकानां डिण्डिमे कथं नाम वेदानुगृहीतापीश्वरस्योपादानता युक्तिमती बुद्धिमदुपग्राह्या स्यादिति चेदुच्यते—नायं प्रपञ्च ईश्वरकर्तृको भवितुमर्हति। न ब्रूमो वैषम्यनैर्धृण्यदोषप्रसङ्गादिति, पूर्वपूर्वसृष्टौ जीवकृतकमनुरोधेन तत्तद्भोग्यपदार्थसर्गवशादी श्वरे तद्दोषपरीहारोपपत्तेः। किन्तुहि चेष्टाप्रयोजनाभावादिति। नेश्वरे चेष्टोपपत्तिमती भवतीति कर्तृत्वं न व्यवतिष्ठते। कृतिनाम प्रयत्नः। सर्वश्च प्रयत्न प्रयत्नितारं कयापि कलया विकल्पोति परिवर्तयति परिणमत्यवस्थान्तरं धर्मान्तरं वा गमयतीति नापलापमर्हति। कृतिमयः कूटस्थता न सेद्गुमीष्टे। यदुच्यते तदपि नित्यं सत्यपि परिणामे यस्मिंस्तत्त्वं न विहन्यत इति, तत्र ब्रूमो नासौ कूटस्थनित्यता भवति। परिणामं तं तं प्राप्नुवती मृत्तवदेवावतिष्ठते यावत्तत्कार्येषु घटादिष्वेकतमदप्यवशिष्यते। तत्तत्कार्योपादानं हि सा। नहि कार्यं नाम कारणं क्षणमपि हातुमीष्टे। परं स्वरूपतस्तु मृद् विनश्वरीति रथ्यापुरुषोऽपि वेद। तेन नित्यताभिलापोऽस्या गौण एव भवितुमर्हति न मुख्यः। आप्तकामस्याकामस्य चेश्वरस्य सृष्टौ प्रयोजनमपि किञ्चिन्नास्ति। तस्य भगवतः स्वाभाविकी ज्ञानबलक्रिया चेति श्रूयत इति चेन्न। तथापि दोषाऽविमोक्तः। स्वाभाविकत्वं नामापरप्रेरितत्वं भवति नान्यत्किञ्चित्। क्रिया नाम सर्वा स्वतः प्रवृत्ता परतो वा प्रवृत्ता कमपि संस्कारं जनयति क्रियावति, तादवस्थमस्य विहन्ति, ऐकरूप्यं चास्यापहरति, विनाशौमुख्यं चास्य व्यनक्ति। एष नियामः, नायं व्यभिचरन् दृष्टः। एतस्यैव हेतोर्जैमिनीया जैनाश्चाऽकर्तृकं जगदिति प्रतिपन्नाः। कुतोऽस्य प्रभव इति तु नेशते ते प्रवक्तुम्, न चापह्नू वतेऽस्य सत्त्वम्।

एवं श्रुत्यनुगृहीतायां युक्त्युपोद्बलितायां ब्रह्मण उपादानकारणतायां स्थितायामित्थं प्रत्यवतिष्ठते वादिनः—यद्येवमुपादानताऽभ्युपेयत तदा यथा पटे कार्यं समुत्पन्ने तत्कारणानां तन्तूनां पृथक् सत्ता नोपलभ्यते यथा वा घटे जाते तत्कारणभूताया मृदः पृथग्भावो नास्ति, एवं जगति जाते ब्रह्म पृथक् नावशिष्येतेति। तान् प्रति ब्रूमो न वयं केवलोपादानत्वमातिष्ठामहे येनायं दोषः प्रादुःभ्यात्, किन्तुर्ह्यभिन्ननिमित्तोपादानत्वमिति।

यद्यपि श्रुतिषु क्वचिदप्ययं प्रपञ्चो ब्रह्मणो विवर्त इति नोक्तं तथापि निरवयवस्य सतो ब्रह्मण उपादानत्वे परिणामासंभवात् पारिशेष्याद्विवर्त एवास्थेयो भवति। विवर्तसमाश्रयेणैव श्रुत्युक्तमुपादानत्वं शक्यमुपपादयितुम्। विवर्तश्चाताक्विक्यन्यथाप्रथेति लक्षितः। यथा वा वेदान्तपरिभाषिकैर्निरूपितम्, विवर्तो नाम उपादानविषयसत्ताकार्योत्पत्तिरिति। इदं दृश्यमानं



नानानामरूपात्मकं विश्वं ब्रह्मणो विवर्त इति कृतान्तः। अयं च विवर्तोऽविद्याकृतो भवति। केयमविद्या नाम अविद्या हि सदसद्भ्यामनिर्वचनीयं त्रिगुणात्मकं ज्ञानविरोधि भावरूपं यत्किञ्चिदिति वदन्ति। सेयमविद्या विक्षेपावरणशक्तिद्वयान्विता ब्रह्माऽऽवृणोति, आवृत्य च विक्षिपति प्रतिभासयति सकलमिमं प्रपञ्चम्। इयं चानादिरपि सान्ता, कालान्तरे बाध्यमानत्वात्। ननु सत्यामविद्यायां जीवः समुद्भवति, सतिचजीवेऽविद्या समुल्लसतीतीतरेतराश्रयताप्रसङ्गः। न ह्यविद्या पश्चात्तनस्वकार्यवृत्तिः स्यादिति युज्यत इति चेत् केयं बिभीषिका। अनादिरयमविद्याया जीवस्य चान्योन्यसमाश्रयः। कालानवच्छिन्नं ह्येतयोः साहचर्यमिति गृहाण।

नन्वेवंविधोऽन्योन्याश्रयसंबन्धो न बुद्धिमुपारोहतीति चेत्, सत्यम्। इदं ह्यविद्याया अविद्यात्वं यद् दुरवधारत्वम्। अनिर्वाच्या चाविद्या बुद्धिविषयश्चेति विप्रतिषिद्धम्। तदुक्तम्—

दुर्घटत्वमविद्याया भूषणं न तु दूषणम्।  
कथञ्छिद् घटमानत्वेऽविद्यात्वं दुर्घटं भवेत्॥ इति।

जगतो व्याख्यात्रीयमविद्या स्वयमव्याख्येयेति स्थितम्। अयं दृश्यमानः प्रपञ्चः सुतुच्छक इति परेऽपि प्रस्थानभेदाः स्वीकुर्यन्ते। तथा चोक्तं सांख्यवृद्धैः पातञ्जले भाष्ये चतुर्थे चरणे—

गुणानां परमं रूपं न दृष्टिपथमृच्छति।  
यत्तु दृष्टिपथं प्राप्तं तन्मायैव सुतुच्छकम्॥ [4.13] इति।

एतदभिप्रेत्यैव भगवता गौतमेनापि सूत्रितम्—“स्वप्नविषयाभिमानवदयं प्रमाणप्रमेयाभिमानः” [4/2/32] इति, “मायागन्धर्वनगरमृगतृष्णिकावद्वा” [4/2/32] इति चेति जितमद्वैतवादिभिः।

महन्नामोपकृतं लोकस्याद्वैतवादेनेति प्रसङ्गादुच्यते। शास्त्रेण यत्र तत्रोपदिष्ट आत्मौपम्यदर्शने तदाश्रिते च व्यवहारे तत् उपपद्यत एव यथाहमात्मनि वर्ते तथा परेषु परत्वेनाभासमानेष्वापि वर्तयेति। वास्तवे नानात्वे सादृश्यबुद्धिरुपदिष्टा मृषा स्यात् तन्निबन्धनश्चव्यवहारो न हितः स्यात्। ऐकात्म्यमिदं सर्वम्, नेह नानास्ति किञ्चनेति च वेदान्तराद्धान्तः। एक एव न आत्मा। नानात्वं तु देहनिबन्धनम्। देहा भिद्यन्ते न देही। आभणति लोकः —यः परः स द्वेष्यो भवतीति। अहमन्यमाहन्त्यामित्युद्यन्नेव विलीयते भावः। कथङ्कारमात्मानमाध्रीय। कथमहमन्यस्मिन् व्यलीकं कुर्याम्। अलीकं तदन्यत्वं वास्तवं चैकत्वम्। न जातुचित्कुतश्छिद् बिभीषीयाम्। परस्माद्धि भयं भवति। मम च परो नास्ति। सर्वो देही ममात्मनोऽव्यतिरिक्त इति। एवं दृढभूमि गते सर्वात्मताविश्वासे सर्वसत्त्वानामहिंसा— यताऽर्थादापद्यते। न खलु कश्चनार्यः क्षोदिष्ठमपि जन्तुं हन्तुमीष्टे। एकात्मत्वं हि वारयति। एवं चाहिंसा परमो धर्म इति फलितम्। आचर्यमाण एष धर्मः सर्वत्र भुवि भावुकं भावयेत्कलिं विकलयेच्छर्मं च प्रतिष्ठापयेत्।



## योगवासिष्ठ में काल का स्वरूप

वैसे तो योगवासिष्ठ में कहीं भी पृथक् रूप से काल के स्वरूप पर विचार नहीं किया गया है पर इधर उधर जो कड़ियां बिखरी पड़ी हैं उन्हें एक दूसरे से जोड़ने पर योगवासिष्ठकार की कालविषयक विचारभृंखला का बहुत कुछ पता लगाया जा सकता है। योगवासिष्ठकार ने उत्पत्ति प्रकरण में सृष्ट्युत्पत्ति प्रक्रिया का विस्तार से वर्णन किया है। उनके अनुसार हिरण्यगर्भवेष्टोपहित परमसत्ता से सर्वप्रथम जीव की उत्पत्ति होती है, तदनन्तर शून्यतारूप शब्दादिगुण बीज स्वसत्ता का उदय होता है। यह सारा प्रपंच उस परा शक्ति का ही है जो स्वयं में अविकृत रहती है। यह मात्र उसकी आत्माभिव्यक्ति है। यह सारा प्रपंच, जिसमें काल भी सम्मिलित है, वास्तव में असत् है परन्तु इसकी प्रतीति इस प्रकार की होती है कि मानो यह सत् हो। वास्तविक सत्ता तो परा शक्ति (ब्रह्म)की ही है। शेष जितनी सत्ताएं हैं जैसे काल सत्ता, कला सत्ता, वस्तु सत्ता, इन सब की पृथक् सत्ता अवास्तविक है। काल की प्रातिभासिक और पारमार्थिक सत्ताओं का भेद योगवासिष्ठ में शुक्रोपाख्यान में भी स्पष्ट किया गया है। जब भृगु अपने पुत्र की मृत्यु से दुःखी होकर काल को शाप देने लगते हैं तो काल मनुष्य-रूप धारण कर उनके सामने जा खड़ा होता है। वह उनसे कहता है कि आपका शाप मुझ पर कोई असर नहीं करेगा। मैं तो नियति पालक हूँ (वयं नियति पालकाः), आपका शाप मुझे जला नहीं पायेगा क्योंकि आप भोजन हैं और मैं भोक्ता। मैं नियति के वश में हूँ। मैंने संसारों की पंक्तियों की पंक्तियां निगली हैं, करोड़ों रुद्रों को खाया है और विष्णुओं के समूहों का भोजन किया है। यह जगत्परमात्मरूप मेरा मूर्तामूर्त स्वरूप है। परमात्मा (ब्रह्म) अपने आप में जगद्रूप में अपने को प्रपंचित करता है। कर्तृता और अकर्तृता दोनों ही परिकल्पित हैं। न ये सत्य हैं न मिथ्या। यही स्थिति सृष्टि में काल की है। काल न सत्य है न मिथ्या। वस्तु स्थिति में काल सत्य नहीं है। वह ब्रह्म का ही प्रपंच है। व्यावहारिक अनुभव में काल मिथ्या नहीं है। ऋतु, अयन इत्यादि साक्षात् अनुभवसिद्ध हैं।

योगवासिष्ठकार इस प्रकार काल की दो प्रकार की सत्ता मानते हैं—पारमार्थिक प्रातिभासिक। पारमार्थिक सत्ता में काल ब्रह्म ही है और और ब्रह्म के समान ही वह अमूर्त है, अज है एवम् अपने अविकृत स्वरूप में विद्यमान रहता है। प्रातिभासिक सत्ता में काल वर्ष, कल्प, युग रूप में व्यावहारिक अनुभव का विषय बन जाता है। इस व्यावहारिक रूप से इसमें दो प्रकार की शक्तियां विद्यमान रहती हैं जिन्हें प्रतिबन्ध और



अभ्यनुज्ञा कहा जाता है।<sup>3</sup> इन्हीं शक्तियों के माध्यम से काल सारी सृष्टि का नियन्त्रण करता है। रोकना और अनुमति देना रूपी प्रक्रियाओं पर समूची सृष्टि व्यवस्था आधारित है। बीज बोये जाने पर अंकुर रूप में फूट निकलता है यहां अभ्यनुज्ञा शक्ति काम कर रही है पर सीधे ही वह वृक्ष नहीं बन जाता यहां प्रतिबन्ध शक्ति काम कर रही है। इन्हीं दो शक्तियों के माध्यम से काल सूत्रधार के समान इस लोकयन्त्र का संचालन करता है।<sup>4</sup> इस लौकिक काल की पारमार्थिक या वास्तविक सत्ता होती नहीं, यह पहले ही कहा जा चुका है। यह तो एक मानसिक कल्पना मात्र है। सूर्य, चन्द्र, ग्रह नक्षत्रादि तत्तत्पदार्थों की गति से इसकी कल्पना कर ली जाती है। एवमेव इस मानसिक कल्पना से तत्तत्पदार्थों की कल्पना कर ली जाती है।<sup>5</sup> पहली कल्पना दूसरे को जन्म देती है और दूसरी पहली को। हैं दोनों ही कल्पना। वास्तविक सत्ता किसी की भी नहीं है। वास्तविक ज्ञान का उदय होने पर किसी भी कल्पना का अस्तित्व नहीं रह जाता। उस समय केवल एक शान्त तत्त्व विराजमान रहता है। उस समय वर्तमान, भूत, भविष्यत्, ज्ञान, अज्ञान, इन सभी का पृथक् अस्तित्व रह नहीं जाता।<sup>6</sup> इन सबका ब्रह्म रूप में ही साक्षात्कार हो जाता है क्योंकि ये सभी के सभी ब्रह्म में बीजरूप में विद्यमान रहते हैं। जिस प्रकार समुद्र में तरंगें उठती रहती हैं और उनके आकार में वृद्धि होती रहती है उसी प्रकार तत्तत्पदार्थों के रूप में ब्रह्म भी बढ़ता रहता है, उसका भी प्रपंच होता रहता है।<sup>7</sup> भूत, भविष्यत् आदि निस्सन्देह ब्रह्म का प्रपंच ही हैं। पर ब्रह्म स्वयं में अनादि और अनन्त हैं, वह न उत्पन्न होता है, न नष्ट होता है।<sup>8</sup> काल देव ईश्वर रूप ब्रह्म का द्वारपाल है।<sup>9</sup> उसी के माध्यम से वह कालरूप तमःप्रकाशादिरहित सब पदार्थों में व्याप्त महेश्वर<sup>10</sup> अनेकानेक संसारों को उलटता पलटता रहता है। इस प्रकार वह कौतुकवश अपने कार्य में रत रहता है।<sup>11</sup> संसार अगाध कालसागर में डूबते उतारते रहते हैं। उत्पन्न हुई सृष्टियों के विनाश की वह प्रतीक्षा करता रहता है।<sup>12</sup> काल ब्रह्म की ही एक शक्ति है जो ब्रह्म से अभिन्न है (शक्तिशक्तिमतोरभेदात्) पर जिस प्रकार जल आवर्त बुद्बुदतरंगादि नाना रूपों को धरण कर लेता है उसी प्रकार यह शक्ति भी ज्ञत्व, कर्तृत्व, भोक्तृत्व, साक्षित्वादि के कारण अनेक रूपों को धारण कर लेती है और ब्रह्म से किञ्चित् भिन्न हो जाती है।<sup>13</sup>

योगवासिष्ठकार के मत में काल एक तत्त्व है। जिस प्रकार नदियां सैकड़ों होने पर भी समुद्र एक ही रहता है उसी प्रकार ऋतु, संवत्सर, अयन आदि अनेक होने पर भी काल एक ही रहता है।<sup>14</sup>

चूँकि योगवासिष्ठकार ने काल को मात्र एक मानसिक कल्पना माना है इसलिये उनके विचार में काल की अनुभूति, प्रतीति अथवा अनुभव पर आधारित है। इसी कारण क्षण रूप में भी परिणत हो सकता है और कल्प क्षण रूप में भी।<sup>15</sup> जिसकी जैसी-जैसी भावना रहती है उसका वैसा-वैसा अनुभव होता रहता है। यदि आंख की झपकी में उसकी अनेक युगों की भावना रहती है तो उसकी लिये आंख की झपकी ही अनेक युग



बन जाते हैं। इसी प्रकार यदि अनेक युगों में उसकी आंख की झपकी की भावना रहती है तो उसके अनेक युग आंख की झपकी बन जाते हैं। जिसका मन समाधि में डूबा है उसके लिये न दिन है न रात।<sup>16</sup> योगवासिष्ठ का यह मत आज की आधुनिकतम विचारधारा के अत्यन्त निकट है। आइन्सटाइन के मत के अनुसार काल व्यक्ति के अनुभव से सम्बद्ध है (Time is relative to an observer) यही उनके सापेक्षवाद (Theory of Relativity) का आधार है। योगवासिष्ठ ने कम से कम दो महत्वपूर्ण उपाख्यानों के माध्यम से<sup>17</sup> इसी महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य का प्रतिपादन किया है।

सुषुप्ति अवस्था में ही इस काल्पनिक काल का अस्तित्व समाप्त हो जाता है। उस स्थिति में जो कुछ भी दिखाई देता है वह सब स्वप्न नगर की तरह विलीन हो जाता है। पृथिवी, पर्वत, दिशाएं, क्रिया, काल, क्रम ये सब अस्तित्व रहित हो जाते हैं।<sup>18</sup> इनमें से कुछ भी नहीं बच रहता। वही अद्वैतैक्य की स्थिति होती है।<sup>19</sup> इस स्थिति में पारमार्थिक सत्ता अर्थात् ब्रह्म रूप में ही काल का साक्षात्कार हो सकता है।

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—वाक्यपदीय, कालसमुद्देश, कारिका।

यहां योगवासिष्ठ की पंक्तियों पर वाक्यपदीय की कारिका के उत्तरार्ध का प्रभाव झलकता है। सम्भवतः यह एक पुराना विचार था जिसे वाक्यपदीयकार एवं योगवासिष्ठकार दोनों ने ही अपना लिया। इसका संकेत योगवासिष्ठ की पंक्ति में श्रुति पद से मिलता है: प्रतिबन्धाभ्यनुज्ञानां कालो दातेति या श्रुतिः। वाक्यपदीय और योगवासिष्ठ दोनों ही अद्वैत वेदान्त के ग्रन्थ हैं, अतः इनमें काल के विषय में एक सा विचार उपलब्ध होना स्वाभाविक ही था।

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## गीता में आत्मा का अमरत्व

गीता में आत्मा के अमरत्व की चर्चा जिस प्रकरण में आती है उसे समझे बिना इसे समझना कठिन है। कौरवों और पाण्डवों की सेनाएं जब एक दूसरे के सामने लड़ने को तैयार खड़ी थीं, तब अर्जुन ने श्री कृष्ण से कहा कि आप मेरा रथ उन दोनों सेनाओं के बीच ले जायें- सेनयोद्भवयोर्मध्ये रथं स्थापय से च्युत - जिससे कि मैं देख सकूँ कि इस युद्ध में मुझें किन से लड़ना है कैर्मया सह योद्धव्यमस्मिन् रणसमुद्यमे। अर्जुन के कहने के अनुसार श्री कृष्ण रथ को दोनों सेनाओं के बीच ला खड़ा करते हैं। अर्जुन तब देखते हैं अपने सामने अपने बन्धु-बान्धवों और गुरुजनों को। उनका पसीना छूटने लगता है। शरीर का अंग अंग सिहर उठता है, मंह सूखने लगता है, शरीर कांप उठता है, रोमांच हो आता है। गाण्डीव हाथ से दूटने लगता है। त्वचा जलने लगती है। सिर चक्कर खाने लगता है। वे सोचते हैं कि इन सब अपने लोगों को मारकर राज्य मिला भी तो क्या। इनके रक्त से सने भोगों को मैं भोगूँ क्या? नहीं मुझसे युद्ध नहीं हो पायेगा। भीष्म और द्रोण जैसे पूजनीय महापुरुषों के वार का जवाब मैं बाण चलाकर कैसे दे पाऊंगा। न भई न। मुझसे युद्ध नहीं होने का। यह कहकर वह रथ की पिछे भाग पर बैठ जाता है- रथोपस्थ उपशित्। तब श्री कृष्ण उसे समझाते हैं कि क्यों उसे विषम परिस्थिति में विषाद ने आ घेरा है - कृउस्त्वा कल्मल मिदं विषमं समुपस्थितम्। आयौ ने तो कभी ऐसा किया नहीं - अनार्यजुष्टम्। स्वर्ग इससे मिलता नहीं अस्वार्थम्- जोकि क्षत्रिय को युद्ध करने से अनायास ही अपने आप ही, यदृच्छया, मिल जाता है। अपयश इससे ही होता है।

अर्जुन को सही रास्ते पर लाने के लिये श्रीकृष्ण तीन मार्ग अपनाते हैं। पहला मार्ग है सांसारिकता का। जिस संसार में रहना है उस संसार की गतिविधि से व्यक्ति विमुख नहीं हो सकता। मान-अपमान, यश-अपयश इस संसार के धर्म है। श्रेष्ठ व्यक्ति मान चाहता है अपमान नहीं, यश चाहता है, अपयश नहीं। अर्जुन के युद्ध न करने से उसका अपयश ही होगा। अर्जुन डर के मारे युद्ध से भाग खड़ा हुआ यही लोग कहते फिरेंगे- मयाद्रणादुपरतं मस्यन्तो त्वामहारथाः युगों-युगों तक उसका अपयश बना रहेगा, जोकि मृत्यु से भी बढ़ कर होगा-

दूसरा मार्ग जो श्री कृष्ण अपनाते हैं वह है-शरीर की नश्वरता का। शरीर ने तो एक न एक दिन मरना ही है। मारने वाला समझता है कि मैं मार रहा हूँ जबकि स्थिति यह है उनका अनंत आ गया है। मारने वाला तो निमित्त बन जाता है मरने का-मयैवेतेनिहताः पूर्वमेव निमित्तमात्रं भवसव्यसाविन्।



तीसरा मार्ग है आत्मा की अमरता का। अर्जुन यह समझते ही क्यों है कि वे मार रहे हैं। कौन किसे मार रहा है- कं घातयपि हन्तिकम्? क्यों अर्जुन अपराध बोध से ग्रस्त हुए जा रहे है। मैं कैसे भाई, चाचा, मामा, पितामह, गुरु - इन सबको मार सकूंगा। वह मार सकने की स्थिति में ही नहीं है। आत्मा तो अजर अमर है। शरीर के मारे जाने पर भी वह मार नहीं जाता है- न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे। हर प्राणी में दो तत्व है एक शरीर और दूसरा आत्मा। शरीर को मारने या न माने का कोई अर्थ नहीं है क्योंकि उसने एक न एक दिन मरना ही है। आत्मा ने मरना है ही नहीं। फिर मैं अमुक को मारता हूँ अमुक को मारता है इस कथन का अवकाश ही कहाँ है? जब अर्जुन किसी को मारने की स्थिति में ही नहीं तो उसे विषाद क्यों। क्यों नहीं वह शस्त्र उठा कर अपना कर्तव्य पूरा करता? यह है वह प्रकरण जहाँ गीता में आत्मा के अमरत्व की चर्चा आई है।

गीता कहती है, कि आत्मा अजन्मा, नित्य, शाश्वत, अति पुरातन है। शस्त्र इसे काट नहीं सकते, आग इसे जलाती नहीं। जल इसे गीला करता नहीं, वायु सुखाती नहीं। काटा यह जा नहीं सकता, जलाया जाना इसका सम्भव नहीं, गीला इसे किया नहीं जा सकता, सुखा इसे कोई सकता नहीं-

नैनं छिन्दन्ति कास्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः  
न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोकयति साहतः।  
अच्छेद्यो यमदाहो यमक्लेद्यो शोष्य एव च।  
नित्यः सर्वज्ञता स्थाणुरचलो यंखनातनः॥

यह नित्य है, सब जगह है, स्थिर है और सनातन (शाश्वत) है।

गीता में आत्मा के जिस स्वरूप का वर्णन किया है वह वही है जो उपनिषदों में भी मिलता है। और यह स्वभाविक ही है। गीता उपनिषदों का सार रूप ही है। एक प्राचीन श्लोक में कहा ही गया है-

सर्वोपनिषदो गावो दोगयागोपालनन्दनः।  
पार्थोवत्सः सुधीभोक्तादुर्घं गीतामृतं महत्।

समस्त उपनिषद् गाय है, उनका दोहन करने वाले भगवान् गोपाल नन्दन है? अर्जुन बड़ा है और दुर्घ गीता रूपी अमृत है।

गीता के प्रत्येक अध्याय की पुष्पिका में भी उपनिषदों को भगवान् के द्वारा गाया हुआ बताया गया है - श्री मद्भगवद्गीतासु उपनिषत्सु।

गीता के जिस श्लोक में आत्मा को अजन्मा, नित्य शाश्वत एवं पुराण कहा है-

अजो नित्या शाश्वता यं पुराणो न हन्यते हव्यमानेशरीरे

वह कठोपनिषद् का ही है जहाँ कि वल्ली में वह ऐसा का ऐसा ही मिलता है।

इसी आत्मा को जानने के लिये, सुनने समझने के लिये और ध्यान करने के लिये

उपनिषद् ने निर्देश किया है - आत्मा वा दूरे मन्तव्यः नेतव्योनिदिध्यासितव्यः। आत्मबोध



हो जाने पर व्यक्ति को कर्म लिप्त नहीं करता है - न कर्म लियते नरे। उससे अल्पित रहकर वह उसके बन्धन से मुक्त होना, जिसके कारण उसे कर्मफल का भोग करने के लिए बार बार शरी धारण करना पड़ता है। जब तक कर्म बन्धन रहेगा आत्मा शरीर धारण करता ही जाएगा। यदि एक शरीर पुराना पड़ जायगा तो वह दूसरा नया शरीर धारण करेगा, ठीक उसी प्रकार जिस प्रकार मनुष्य फटे पुराने वस्त्रों को त्याग कर नये धारण करता है-

वाससिजीणि यथाविहाय  
नवानिग्रहणाति नरो पराणि।  
तथा शरीराणि विहा जीर्णा-  
न्यन्यनिसंयाति नरो पाणि॥

शरीर की तो यही स्थिति है। उसने तो पुराने कपड़ों की तरह बदले जाते ही रहना है। तो उसके जाने पर बिखलना-तत्र का परि वना? अनश्वर के रहते नश्वर के पीछे क्या भटकना। जिसने बने ही रहना है, एक सार, एक समान, उसका बोध होने पर क्या मोह और क्या शोक? तत्र को मोहः का शोक एकत्व मनुष्यचतः?

बृहदारण्यकः उपनिषद् में आत्मा के एक शरीर से दूसरे शरीर में अनुप्रवेश को एक अन्य अतीव सटीक उदाहरण से समझाया गया है। एक लूता, घास के एक तिनके पर चढ़ती जाती है जैसे ही वह उसके अन्त तक पहुँचती है तो झट से दूसरे तिनके पर चढ़ जाती है और उस पर चलने लगती है वही स्थिति है आत्मा की और शरीर की। तिनके बदलते रहते हैं लूता, , वहीं की वहीं रहती है शरीर बदलते रहते हैं, आत्मा वहीं की वहीं रहती है। वह तो सदा से है और सदा रहेगी ही उसका जन्म और पुनर्जन्म नहीं है - नायं भूत्वा भविता न नभूयः वह तो अज है, अजन्मा है। सदा था, सदा से है और सदा ही रहेगा।

किसी भी जीव के सन्दर्भ में जब आत्मा की चर्चा की जाती है तो उससे तात्पर्य होता है जीवात्मा, individual individual self का जीवात्मा individual self और परमात्मा supreme self दोनों एक ही है। असीम को जब सीमित कर देखा जाता है तो उसे अलग नाम दे दिया जाता है। जीव तक सीमित होने के कारण वह जीवात्मा कहलाता है। सीमा हट जाय तो वह असीम ही है। अलग अलग पात्रों में रखा जल, अमुक पात्र का जल, अमुक पात्र का जल कहलाता है। पात्रों के भेद के कारण ही जल का भेद कर लिया जाता है। अन्यथा जल तो जल ही है। इसी प्रकार जीवोपाध्यावच्छिन्न आत्मा जीवात्मा कहा जाता है। जीवोपाधि हटा देने पर आत्मा आत्मा ही है अनादि, अनन्त, अनश्वर। वह सब प्राणियों में है, सब प्राणी उसमें हैं - सर्व - जूतेषु वात्मानां सर्वभूतानि वात्मनि। उस विशाल, बृहद्, ब्रह्म का साक्षात्कार होने पर मनुष्य में और उसमें कोई पृथक्ता रह नहीं जाती। ब्रह्म को जानना और ब्रह्म बन जाना दोनों एक ही हैं - ब्रह्मविद् ब्रह्मोवभवति।



















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